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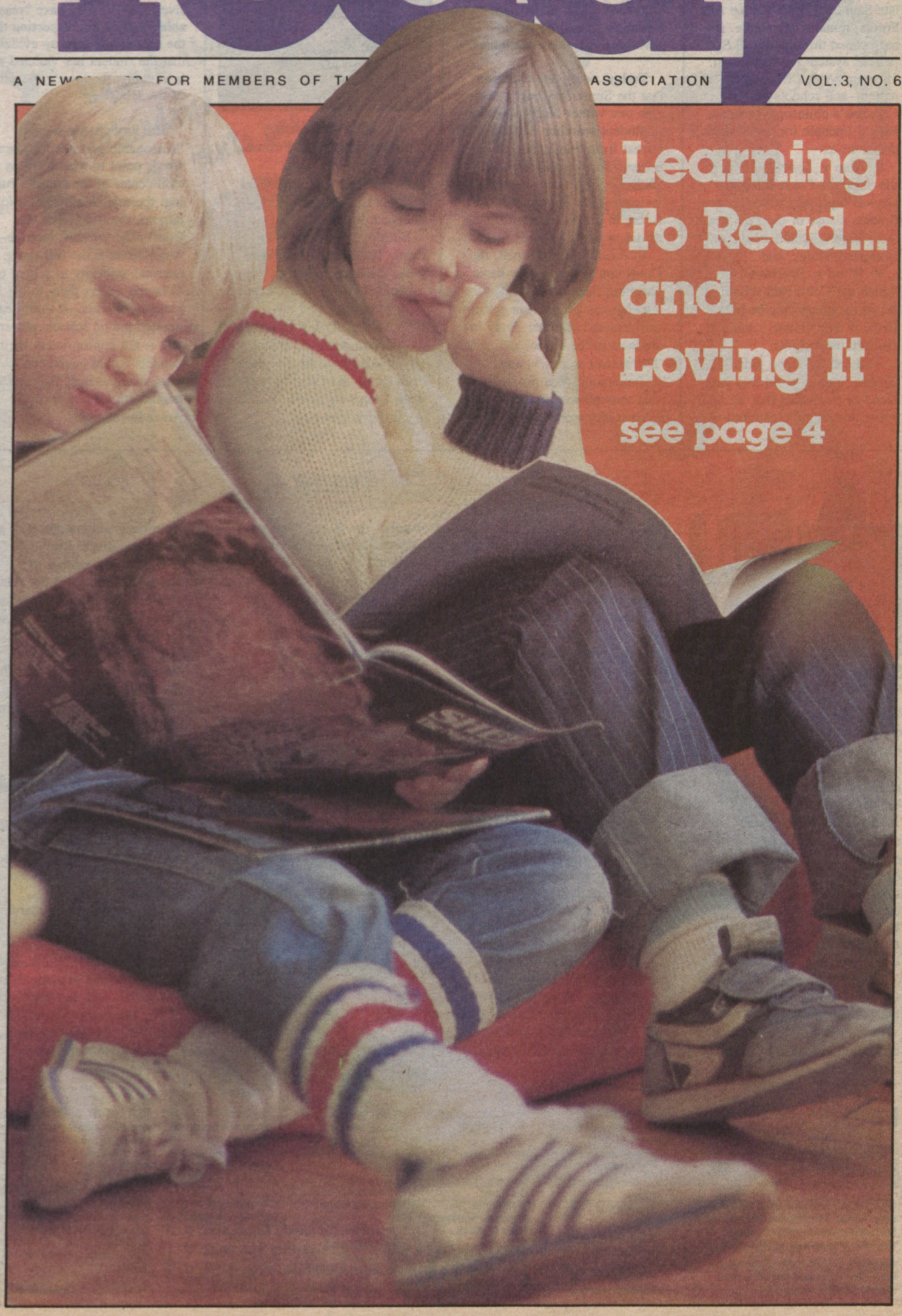


John Gram

Learning To Read... and Loving It

see page 4

PRESIDENT'S VIEWPOINT

Supremely Sensible

"The Constitution does not stop at the public school doors like a puppy waiting for its master, but instead it follows the student through the corridors, into the classroom, and onto the athletic field."

This principle, penned by the late Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas, remains inviolable. It has echoed through our U.S. judicial system for more than 15 years. And it has served the nation—and schools—well.

Fortas's philosophy was the logical linchpin for such laudable decisions as—

► *Goss v. Lopez*, in which the Supreme Court ruled that schools must adhere to the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment in student suspension proceedings, and

► *Wood v. Strickland*, in which the Court said school board members may be held liable if they violate a student's constitutional rights.

These enlightened judicial actions, a decade old this year, stand as reminders that we who serve this nation's children—precisely because of our responsibility to prepare young people for citizenship—must scrupulously protect and defend constitutional mandates. If we don't, warned a 1943 lower court decision, we will "strangle the young mind at its source *and teach youth to discount important principles of our government as mere platitudes*."

Today, some are claiming that the Supreme Court's decision this winter on the question of student searches represents a retreat from this legacy of concern for the civil rights of students. That claim is empty. I welcomed the Supreme Court's ruling in *T.L.O. v. New Jersey*, as did so many of you.

In *T.L.O.*, you'll recall, the Court considered a very basic question: does the Fourth Amendment prohibition against unwarranted searches apply to students in the school setting? The answer was firm and unambiguous. The proposition that students are protected against unreasonable searches

Joe Di Dio

NEA President
Mary Hatwood Futrell

and seizures by public school officials is, said the Court, "beyond dispute."

But the Court didn't stop there. The Justices sought to strike a balance between "the schoolchild's legitimate expectations of privacy and the school's equally legitimate need to maintain an environment in which learning can take place."

In short, the Court agreed to walk a legal tightrope. And at no point did it stumble.

What accounts for this grand performance? *Common sense.* The Court recognized that "without first establishing discipline and maintaining order, teachers cannot begin to educate their students." On the basis of this insight, the Justices granted school officials the right to initiate a student search—though never an "excessively intrusive" one—if they have "reasonable grounds for suspecting that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law or the rules of the school."

The key phrase here is "reasonable grounds." Those words point to what I see as the vital center of the Court's ruling: the rejection of the *in loco parentis* doctrine. Had the Court affirmed this doctrine—which extends the full range of parental authority to school officials and allows them to act *in place of parents*—it would have granted public schools power that is not appropriately theirs. Schools would have been immunized against the need to respect students' Fourth Amendment rights.

In the *T.L.O.* case, the Court took special care to keep the line between parental authority and school authority clear and distinct. The *in loco parentis* doctrine, it argued, "is in tension with contemporary reality."

I agree. What we need today is not teachers acting *in place of* parents but teachers acting *in concert with* parents. *That* is the implicit—but vitally important—message that emerges from the *T.L.O.* ruling.

Our responsibility is now clear. We must prod local school districts to offer public forums that bring school employees, teachers, parents, school board members, and other concerned citizens together to establish guidelines consistent with the Court's decision.

Together, we can formulate policies that fully respect students' right to privacy, display unswerving fidelity to the Bill of Rights, *and* ensure a school environment conducive to learning. Together, we can bring the law to life.

What better lesson on liberty and responsibility could we teach?

TRENDS

Schools: Perhaps Too Right-eous

Why does school so often turn off gifted students? Not because it's too easy, says Florida researcher Dorothy Sisk; more likely because it's too "left-brained."

People who tend to rely on the left hemisphere of the brain, explains Sisk, are logical, linear (print-oriented), and factual—more comfortable with algebraic equations than with poetic similes. These traits are precisely those that most curriculums encourage—and reward.

People who rely primarily on the right hemisphere, in contrast, are philosophical, intuitive, and visual. And gifted students, according to Sisk, are more likely to be "righties" than "lefties." These students "may have trouble in school because they're being taught in a style that opposes their own."

Teachers and researchers, Sisk adds, "should find out if students with right-brained tendencies learn better with right-brained teaching methods—which would emphasize models and images over texts, demonstration over written description, essays that explain *why* over tests that ask *what*."

Wanted: Risk-Takers

Students unafraid of a low grade and willing to take a shot at the toughest high school courses are the type of freshmen that the nation's top colleges most vigorously recruit.

Test scores "have moved to the back burner," reports Richard Moll of the University of California at Santa Cruz. Moll's research shows that the most prestigious colleges now rate applicants on the basis of five criteria, the most important of which are *course difficulty* and *grades in the most demanding courses*.

The best schools seek risk-takers—not students whose prime objective is to protect their grade point averages.

Little Green Gise

President Reagan must be enjoying at least some of his mail these days. Students around the country are lobbying the Chief Executive to pick *their* teacher as the first citizen passenger in space.

Among the appeals, reported by journalist Edward Fiske in a recent *New York Times* feature:

► I'd like my teacher "to bring back some moon dust and some little green gise."

► Send my teacher to Mars—"that's where her relatives are. It would be nice for her to have a small reunion with her family."

► My teacher's "a good American, Mr. President. She eats apple pie and plays baseball on weekends. She is a regular Betsy Ross, if you know what I mean."

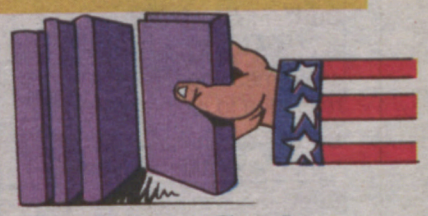
A Charming MsTake

More than one magazine has recently reported the true story of a British grandmother who asked her five-year-old grandson what he planned to be when he grew up.

The boy gave a standard reply: doctor, barrister, firefighter.

"How about Prime Minister?" asked the grandmother. "Wouldn't you like that?"

The little boy looked appalled. "Oh no," he answered. "That's a woman's job."



Goodbye to Good Children's Books

A newly noted casualty of cuts in funding for school and public libraries: good children's literature.

Publishers have traditionally relied on libraries for 85 percent of their juvenile literature sales. But, according to the American Library Association, libraries now account for as little as a quarter of all juvenile book purchases.

The reason? Sharp reductions in federal funding for school libraries and, in states like California, the erosion of tax support for public libraries.

One result is that good new juvenile books quickly become extinct: libraries can't afford replacement copies, and publishers can't afford storage space.

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Publisher: Robert E. Harman
Associate Publisher: Sam Pizzigati
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VOCABULARY LESSON

Awesome Is Out, *Stoked* Is In

"Slang," a teacher recently remarked, "is the language kids use to prove they're in—and keep adults out." He was right on target.

Several of the reasons the late, noted lexicographer Eric Partridge gave for the use of slang are directly applicable to the language that resounds in the halls of today's schools. People use slang to achieve an arresting or startling effect; show they belong; show others they *don't* belong; and avoid being understood by those not in one's group.

Whatever the reasons, "teenspeak" abounds. And it's not limited to teenagers. In many metropolitan areas, kids as young as 10 hold entire dialogues in slang—conversations few adults can decipher.

The following selection of some of the more commonly used "teenspeak" is offered for your edification, with a caveat. Slang varies from region to region—and it moves around the country. What's current in Florida may be passe in California—and not yet heard of in New York.

—Heidi Steffens

I flailed it! Now I'm popped. The teacher's burnt. Bust her out! Squash that full-on party Saturday. I'll be in the crib—my rents are harsh.*
Chill out, homegirl.**

Joe Di Dio

** 'I failed the test. Now I'm in trouble. The teacher's really tough. I'm so mad at her. I might as well forget that great party on Saturday. I'll be at home—my parents are strict.'*

*** 'Take it easy, friend.'*

A Glossary for Rents And Other Squids

Bail—cut a class. Also a putdown meaning to forget or ignore someone or something, as in "Bail that."

Book'n—going very fast

Buff—muscular, tough

Bump'n—sounds good, in reference to music; *jammin'* has same meaning. Related expressions: *crush'n,* looks good, in reference to clothes; and *hit'n,* tastes good.

Burnt—tough, strict, as in "My teacher's burnt." Also too bad, unfortunate, as in "That's burnt."

Bust—an insult, as in "Bust you out!"

Chief—term of address, used for practically anyone

Chill out—be cool, take it easy

Crib—home

Drive the porcelain bus—throw up

Flail—do poorly on or fail a test

Flake—fail to keep an appointment, as in "I flaked on her."

Full-on, fully—best possible, perfect

Gnarly—gross, raunchy, really disgusting. In some regions may mean "good."

Harsh—mean, strict. Also something bad that happens, as in "That's harsh."

Homeboy, homegirl—friendly term of address for someone from same neighborhood or school.

Kick back—relax

Kill—really good, as in "That's so kill."

Mellow up—calm down

Neat whistle—person wearing weird clothing

Pop—be in trouble

Rad, radical—really neat, cool, terrific

Rents—parents

Rouge—steal

Ruff—neat, cool

S'up—a greeting meaning "what's up?"

Squash that melon (or squash that)—forget it, it's no good

Squid—someone who's out of it; synonyms: *dork, geek, narc, stud, juice box*

Stoked—really excited; synonym: *siked* (or *psyched)*

Tamale time—expression connoting embarrassment

Totally—absolutely

Word—a noun of affirmation, to acknowledge or support a statement, as in "That girl is fine. Word."

IN THE CLASSROOM

READING: A FOUR

Four Association members, with a combined total of almost 80 years of experience in teaching kids to read, share some of the secrets of their success.

Ever since the days of McGuffey, America's educators have engaged in spirited debates over how best to teach reading. Methods have run the gamut—from rote to phonics to the integration of reading and writing.

Today there's a growing consensus among teachers and researchers on some methods that work.

Yet in the current attacks on public education, the number one complaint is often that schools are graduating illiterates. The public doesn't see any breakthroughs in efforts to reach low achievers. Meanwhile, the argument goes, many of the better students—who can read—simply don't. They show little interest in picking up a book for pleasure.

Are we producing a generation of nonreaders? Emphatically not, say four NEA members who are working hard to instill a love of reading in their students. On these pages, Joanna Reno, Ree Kostuch, Brian Kreibich, and Jane Landes agree there's no one tried-and-true way to teach reading. Each child is different, and the successful reading teacher draws from a repertoire of different classroom approaches.

It's a typical weekday morning in southeast Iowa's Harmony school district. Elementary students can expect to have at least 45 minutes of reading instruction.

Joanna Reno's 22 first graders are excited. One of their classmates is about to tell a story, his *own* creation, through puppets. A puppet theater is prominent in Reno's classroom at the Harmony Elementary School, Bonaparte Center. Any student can volunteer to write and produce a puppet show. And they all do.

"Creating a puppet show motivates all kinds of students to learn to read and write," Reno says. "Even those who have only word recognition can team up with other students to write a show."

This is just one way that Reno teaches reading through writing—a technique that's becoming increasingly popular in schools across the country.

Last fall, Reno discovered that her new first graders read on five different levels. Two were already at fourth grade level, two at third grade level, and two at beginning second. The other 16 were average or below for first grade. Reno quickly went to work on her dilemma—how to accommodate all her students' reading needs.

Reno wrote several original stories on three grade levels and either illustrated them herself or asked the children to illustrate their copies after they'd read them. Reno also got those students who read above grade level to sign individual contracts, pledging to complete independent assignments. These included two outside activities—teacher's choice and child's choice—to be completed in a specified length of time.

One student, for example, chose to interview her grandmother about school in "the old days" and then write a booklet based on the interview and read it to the class.

All Reno's students began to keep journals, which they still update twice a week.

Reno serves as K-8 reading coordinator for the district's three schools, overseeing the curriculum, keeping track of test scores, and sometimes tutoring students.

Once Reno tutored a fourth grader who admitted to her that he was afraid of books. The student was in a special summer reading program for elementary students at the University of Iowa.

"If I had approached him with a book when we met, I would have lost him," Reno recalls. "So I sought first to build rapport with him and to boost his self-confidence."

Reno wrote sentences on narrow strips of paper. First she had the student read from strips that had only one sentence. Then she moved to two-sentence strips, and later to half sheets of paper. Within eight weeks, the student was reading an eight-page book.

"Books, teachers, and peers are all threatening to poor readers," Reno says. "Teachers must be careful not to give these students anything too difficult at first. There are many ways to make reading interesting. I just let my imagination go and see what I can come up with."

Patrick Dennis

Ree Kostuch's fifth graders listen carefully to her instructions, looking forward to an entertaining reading exercise.

"Learn a Word" is the game of the day for the seven fifth graders in Ree Kostuch's special pull-out reading class at Audubon Elementary School in Baton Rouge, La.

Kostuch, who teaches first through fifth graders who've fallen behind in reading, believes vocabulary building is a key to improving reading skills. But "traditional methods of teaching vocabulary often bore students," she says.

So Kostuch creates attractive vocabulary board games. For "Learn a Word," a player takes the top card from a stack on the game board. One word is on the card, and the player must pronounce the word and use it in a sentence. If the player's response is correct, he or she rolls the

John Gram

Joanna Reno's Iowa first graders love to read—especially when an original classroom performance is part of the bargain.

A Researcher's Perspective

Richard Anderson, director of the Center for the Study of Reading at the University of Illinois, has high praise for many reading teachers—especially those featured on these pages.

"They sound like extra special teachers—those we should hold up as an example," Anderson says.

But this reading researcher has some concerns about the way reading is being taught—or not taught—around the country. For one, he's cautious about the use of basal readers.

"Some 90 to 95 percent of our schools put moderate to heavy reliance on basal readers," Anderson says. "One can't make a sweeping statement about whether or not these readers are good or bad. But in some circumstances, they can be detrimental."

Among the problems Anderson sees are the numerous skills sheets some series include. Teachers may decide to use all of them, and that takes an extraordinary amount of time. Often the materials aren't well designed, he adds. The directions aren't always clear, especially on how to use the materials with slow readers. And the materials may serve as mere busywork for better readers.

"Teachers can't be successful if they serve students a bland diet of worksheets," Anderson cautions. "The basal reader design problems rest at the publishers' doorsteps, but teachers are responsible for overuse of these materials."

Effective reading teachers usually have the support of their principals, other supervisors, or both, Anderson believes. How can administrators show support?

IN THE CLASSROOM

STAR PERFORMANCE

die and moves an appropriate number of spaces. The player who reaches the finish line first is the winner.

Another board game popular with Kostuch's students is "Instead of Words," where players look at one word and choose several synonyms.

"Many of the words that I include in my board games are words that my students would normally see for the first time—and often have difficulty with—in one of the stories we read together," Kostuch explains. "But tackling a new word in a game is fun, and the kids don't think of this as learning something difficult."

Kostuch also believes parents and the community can be a great force in encouraging children to read. She and her colleagues seek the public's involvement in their reading programs. They let parents know how they can help with homework, suggest books for reading with their children, and encourage them to make frequent family pilgrimages to the library.

"Children should see their parents—and older brothers and sisters—reading magazines or books for enjoyment, and discussing them," Kostuch says.

Last year, Kostuch and other reading teachers in Baton Rouge developed some tips for parents—tips broadcast by high school students over a radio station owned by the school system.

Kostuch and other members of the local reading council recently sponsored a story day at a local mall, where teachers volunteered to read to children while their parents shopped.

"I'm not disappointed that I don't have a lot of dramatic success stories in my reading classes," Kostuch adds. "What's gratifying for me is to have a classroom teacher say to me, 'Brian doesn't need the special class any longer,' or to see my students excited about choosing a book to read from the stack I keep in my room."

David Sandell

A group of students at E. G. Kromrey Middle School in Middleton, Wisc.—a Madison suburb—are doing research in the library.

Their assignment isn't from their advanced reading teacher, Brian Kreibich (*above*). It's a series of questions from one of their classmates. Kreibich's only requirement is that the students find answers in references *other than* encyclopedias—a skill many students leave high school without learning, he says.

Kreibich teaches advanced, average, and remedial reading classes. He doesn't believe students' reading problems are any different from those of years ago, but "*kids* are different," he says.

"Today's kids have so many options available to them that weren't available to other generations," Kreibich points out. "Computer games, the emphasis on sports, and especially television."

Kreibich believes television has had a tremendous impact on education in general and especially on reading: "Watching TV is a convenient, easy form of entertainment. Reading is more of a chore, and kids from any background will opt to take the easy way out."

But creative teachers can make good use of television, Kreibich adds.

"Take a look at the books made into TV miniseries—*Roots*, *Fatal Vision*, and others. The TV exposure really boosted sales of the books. Teachers need to watch for series like these and tie them in with reading and writing. We've got to show the kids that not all good things come on television. This takes time, but once kids are turned on to reading, they find it enjoyable."

Kreibich uses microcomputers to teach some reading exercises, such as vocabulary building and finding the main idea. But, he says, there must be enough terminals for each child to have practice time. And Kreibich isn't always happy with the reading software that's available.

"It's improving," he says, "but we still have to monitor it closely." (*See related story on page 9.*)

Role playing is just one way Jane Landes' students learn to appreciate what they've read.

Mark Hinojosa

Jane Landes has just finished reading part of a story to six third graders in one of her remedial reading classes at Prairie View School in Lees Summit, Mo. Now the students will read silently and complete the story as music plays softly in the background.

Landes uses a variety of media—computers, reading machines, tape recorders—to teach remedial reading to first through sixth graders.

"There's no doubt that the varied materials available today are helpful in teaching reading skills," she says. "But I feel strongly that we should put real books in our children's hands every day. And we should read *with* them."

Landes says she'd never limit her students' reading activities to practice and worksheets, finding the main idea, or following directions.

Whenever possible, "I try to incorporate music, art, and dance into the reading program," she explains. "With all the emphasis on high tech, we must be careful to offer students the beauty to be found in the subtleties of life—in watching seasons change, or maybe reading a poem with Mozart in the background."

Landes believes today's kids can and must learn to appreciate the rewards of reading.

"When you pick up a magazine, are you aware that you're looking for the main idea?" she asks. "Probably not. But the fact that you *choose* to read a magazine means that along the way, somebody made you feel good about reading."

The local affiliate of the International Reading Association recently presented Landes with its literary award for her outstanding contribution to improving reading in the community. Landes attributes much of her success with students to the support she gets from her teacher colleagues, administrators, and parents.

"It takes a total community effort to teach children to appreciate reading," Landes says. "And fortunately, I've worked in that type of climate most of my teaching career."

—Marian Clayton

"They can be instructional leaders," Anderson says, "focusing the school on academic attainment, setting goals, and maintaining a collegial, upbeat school climate."

The best administrators aren't afraid to be instructional helpers, Anderson adds, "rolling up their sleeves and working with teachers on curriculum problems and providing resources. Then too, principals must give teachers elbow room to try things out."

Anderson sees the lack of trained reading teachers at the middle and high school levels as a major stumbling block for many poor readers.

"In times of declining enrollments," he observes, "many school districts will assign teachers from closed-down or reduced departments to reading classes. These teachers may not have had any training in teaching reading. More important, they may not be interested in it." In some high schools, reading classes become "dumping grounds," Anderson notes.

"Those assigned to teach reading classes often have low status," he says, "when they really need schoolwide support."

—M.C.

Resources

The NEA Professional Library, P.O, Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516, has a variety of materials available on the teaching of reading. Please include stock numbers when ordering.

Farr, Roger. *Reading: Trends and Challenges.* 1981. 32 pp. (stock #1054-X-00-D) $2.50.

Manning, Maryann Murphy and Gary L. *Reading Instruction in the Middle School.* 1979. 96 pp. (#1707-2-00-0) $5.95.

Shuman, R. Baird, *Elements of Early Reading Instruction.* 1979. 96 pp. (#1623-8-00-0) $6.95.

Shuman, R. Baird. *Strategies in Teaching Reading: Secondary.* 1978. 128 pp. (#1716-1-00-0) $6.95.

Reading at School and at Home, leaflet available in package of 25. (#0871-5-00-0) $4.95.

NEA Reading In-Service Training Program. Includes all books listed here plus 15 more and a guide. (#0630-5-20-D) $152.50.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Walt Disney a Menace?

Extremists want Disney movie, role-playing, and elementary guidance counselors barred from Missouri schools—and new federal regulations may help them get their way.

Hillsboro, Mo., is a typical American community—with an atypical problem.

A small, vocal, and highly organized group of parents is demanding that teachers in this small town about 20 miles southwest of St. Louis change what they teach and how they teach it.

Can a small minority of ideologically rigid parents really turn a curriculum upside down? The ideologues in Hillsboro think they can, and they base their optimism on a set of federal regulations adopted just last November.

Those regulations were written to enforce an obscure, seven-year-old federal statute known as the Hatch Amendment. This law was originally intended—according to its sponsor, Utah Senator Orrin Hatch—to "let parents decide whether or not to permit their school children to be subjected to research and demonstration projects, a component of which is psychological or psychiatric testing or treatment."

But ultraconservative critics of public education, led by Phyllis Schlafly, lobbied hard—and successfully—for regulations that would extend the Hatch Amendment's mandate. Schlafly's own organization, the Eagle Forum, and other like-minded extremist groups now maintain that the regulations adopted last fall apply the Hatch Amendment to any "controversial materials."

Schlafly has opened a national campaign to frighten parents into filing complaints under the new Hatch Amendment regulations. The regulations allow parents to demand a federal investigation of their school district if they don't like the way their complaint is handled at the local level.

Wolves, Inuits, and a young biologist are the focus of the 1983 Walt Disney film "Never Cry Wolf." To extremists in Hillsboro, Mo., this PG film is the sort of "controversial" material they contend parents should challenge under the five-month-old Hatch Amendment regulations.

Last fall, parents inspired by Schlafly and the extremist Pro-Family Forum began appearing at Hillsboro school board meetings to protest courses and activities that ranged from role-playing and writing exercises through elementary school counseling to high school sociology.

The angry parents even objected to a Walt Disney movie, *Never Cry Wolf*, which had been shown after school as an extracurricular activity.

After the third school board meeting was disrupted by the parents and their demands, members of the Hillsboro Community Teachers Association had had enough.

Hillsboro teachers solicited the support of local community leaders, including the clergy, who began appearing at board of education meetings and sending letters to the board.

In short order, parents throughout Hillsboro began wearing "Stand By Your Teacher" buttons to support the town's teachers. At the February board meeting, over 100 parents looked on as the board of education refused to cave in to the extremists' demands.

Groups like Schlafly's show no sign of letting up their Hatch Amendment campaign. That's why NEA has joined with the National School Boards Association and other education groups in a lobbying drive to straighten out the dangerously vague Hatch regulations.

NEA's Human and Civil Rights division, meanwhile, urges school districts to make sure they have in place carefully worded policies and criteria for the selection of curriculum materials—as well as an equitable process for dealing with parent complaints.

"Without these policies and procedures, school systems are defenseless against frivolous and destructive attack," explains NEA Human and Civil Rights Director Chuck Williams.

"NEA believes that schools will improve with parental and community involvement," adds Williams. "But we don't believe that any national group like Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum has the right to impose its beliefs on local communities and their schools."

How the Extremists Frighten Parents

The Maryland Coalition of Concerned Parents on Privacy Rights in Public Schools is one of a number of groups now trying to exploit the federal Hatch Amendment regulations to censor schools and teachers.

"This group," notes NEA Vice-President Keith Geiger, "has prepared a form letter that it's asking parents to sign and send to their local school districts. The form letter demands that schools obtain written parental permission before teachers engage in a long list of classroom activities."

Among those activities: discussions about parenting, education pertaining to drug and alcohol abuse, role-playing in situations involving moral issues, autobiographical assignments, blindfold walks, and instruction in organic evolution, nuclear war, witchcraft, one-world government, pornography, and population control.

Literature produced by Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum is even more bizarre. Schlafly has mass-mailed a letter to parents that claims students "in classrooms all across America" are being "taught how to write a suicide note" and "taught the normalcy of hating your parents."

"What kind of ideologue," asks NEA's Geiger, "can publish material like this—and then use it to terrify parents?"

WASHINGTON WATCH

Policymakers in the nation's capital are once again debating the national agenda as they wrangle over the federal budget for the new fiscal year beginning next October. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court has handed down a ruling that could be important for education employees.

✓ In its 5-4 decision in the case of *Garcia v. San Antonio Metropolitan Transit Authority*, the Supreme Court held that San Antonio municipal transit workers are covered by the minimum wage and overtime provisions of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act. The Court had ruled the opposite way in the landmark *National League of Cities v. Usery* case back in 1976, effectively stopping the drive for passage of a federal law to provide and protect the **collective bargaining** rights of state and local public employees.

The decision handed down by the new majority on the high court—thanks to a switch in sides by Justice Harry Blackmun—now broadens the powers of Congress to legislate in areas that had previously been left to the states.

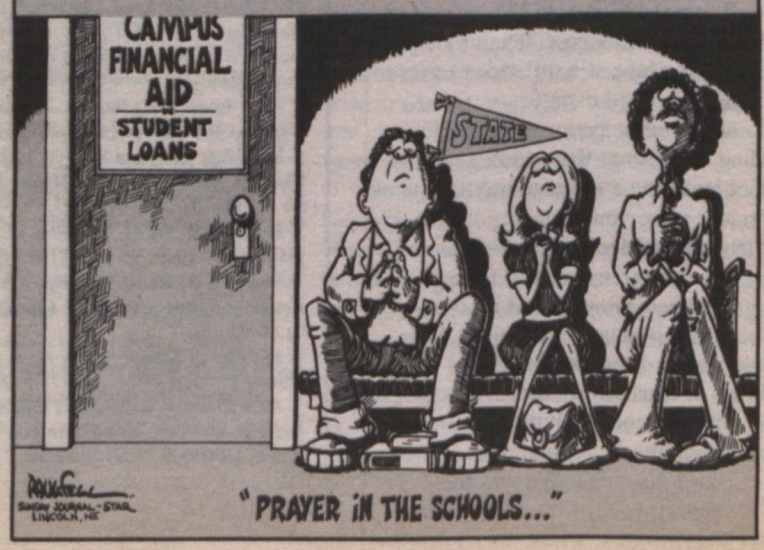
The decision is encouraging for advocates of the rights of education employees. However, the battle for a national collective bargaining law is far from over, given the present political climate.

"Nine years ago, we had a supportive White House coming in," says NEA General Counsel Bob Chanin. "We had a decade of political clout building towards a national public employee collective bargaining bill. We had an active coalition in the labor community. It will take time to rebuild to where we were in '76. But now, with the *Garcia* decision, we do have one more option—a potentially important option—for gaining better hours, wages, and working conditions for education employees."

✓ As federal programs in elementary and secondary education were scrutinized at a series of House Education and Labor Committee regional hearings in New Orleans, Los Angeles, and New York in recent weeks, Association representatives were on the scene. Among those testifying on behalf of a substantial and well-defined **federal role** in promoting equity and excellence in education were the presidents of several NEA state affiliates: Tennessee's Donna Cotner, Mississippi's Alice Harden, Louisiana's Virginia Budd, Maine's Tom Harvey, Vermont's Maida Townsend, and New Jersey's Edithe Fulton. The New Orleans hearing occurred on Valentine's Day, so area students in federally funded programs presented the visiting members of Congress with cards bearing messages like "My heart's in Title I."

✓ In an effort to reduce the federal deficit, Congress is looking seriously at cutting **Social Security**. For example, the Senate Republican leadership has already agreed to recommend eliminating this year's cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Social Security recipients. NEA is working with other groups in a nationwide grassroots campaign to head off any changes. (*See story on page 17*). Besides the COLA, another major concern is the White House proposal to shift more health care costs to patients in the Medicare and Medicaid programs.

✓ Testifying against the Reagan Administration's proposed cutbacks in **college student aid** before a joint congressional subcommittee hearing in South Burlington, Vermont, Vermont-NEA General Counsel Jim Suskin reminded Sen. Robert Stafford (R-Vt.) and Rep. James Jeffords (R-Vt.) that student aid and other federally funded higher education programs are essential to assuring educational opportunity, promoting research, developing human capital, and preserving diversity in the nation's postsecondary institutions.



Local Look

CALIFORNIA

Candlelight vigils in front of school board members' homes. A day of mourning on which teachers wore black. A mock burial of morale.

These are some of the tactics the 4,000 members of the San Diego Teachers Association (SDTA) successfully used this school year to break the impasse in their negotiations with the school district over a wage and benefits "reopener" in their two-year contract.

Teachers also implemented a "work to contract" move—and won community support by explaining their decision at televised school board meetings.

Finally, after nine months of negotiations and four months at impasse, the reopener was settled. SDTA won average salary increases of 10 percent, retroactive to July 1, 1984.

San Diego teachers are most pleased with the fact that they won the settlement by working together. "Each school came up with its own plan and implemented it," says SDTA President Gail Boyle. "That's why it worked. We built a real collective concern and unity that's there for our next go-round."

That next go-round is now. The contract expires June 30, so SDTA is already back at the bargaining table.

Meanwhile, the district's Classified Employees Association (CEA-NEA) is still at impasse and has gone to fact-finding on a contract that expired in June 1984. SDTA members have joined CEA's early-morning informational picket lines.

WYOMING

Members of the Sweetwater Education Association (SEA) recently ratified Wyoming's first new master agreement in more than a decade. Only two other Wyoming locals have master contracts; eight more have procedural agreements.

Notes SEA President Rudy Pershin: "In a state like ours, where there's no collective bargaining law, it's difficult to get a school board even to use the term *master contract*, much less agree to one. Community organizing and creative vocabulary were what finally got us a binding, negotiated 'professional agreement.'"

Adds SEA chief negotiator Jennie Bonham: "Over the 16 months of negotiations, our most consistently useful community relations activity was a strong teacher showing at school board meetings. We had the support, too, of the local United Steelworkers, whose members also came to board meetings. Working people would not accept the board's refusal to negotiate."

SEA serves more than 400 teachers in the Rock Springs area in Wyoming's sparsely populated southwestern corner. With the procedural agreement in place, SEA is currently negotiating on substantive matters, including salary and benefits.

VIRGINIA

When the Fairfax Education Association (FEA) decided to enlarge its headquarters building recently, it arranged to have the job done by 70 of the area's best bricklayers and carpenters—who also happen to be teenagers.

They're students enrolled in the Fairfax County high schools' building trades skills program, and the "real world" houses and commercial buildings they put up are all part of their training. Profits from these ventures go to the school district.

FEA President Donna Caudill explains why her 6,300-member Association chose students to do the construction work: "We saw this as an ideal opportunity to support the vocational program and to help kids practice what they're taught."

The building trades and other vocational programs are sponsored by the Fairfax Vocational Educational Foundation, a non-profit group of business persons who provide money, supplies, and expertise. Usually students in the program gather for classes in a portable structure that follows them from one construction site to another.

But for the five months it took to build the one-story addition to FEA headquarters, classes met in the FEA building.

INDIANA

Last January, the 83 members of the NEA-Union County Teachers Association got so fed up they struck their school system for 11 days, finally winning a new contract.

For nearly a decade, teachers in this district on the Indiana–Ohio border have been forced to begin each new school year without a contract. Last fall was no exception.

One source of teachers' continuing frustration has to do with the district's twin-state location. Teachers at College Corners Elementary, for example, have to deal with three separate school boards—one from Ohio, another from Indiana, and a third joint board—and they must meet both states' certification standards. Three superintendents are involved—one from Indiana and two from Ohio, one of whom hires teachers.

The local's job action earned teachers a 6.4 percent pay hike the first year and a formula for the second year, long-term disability insurance, grievance procedures and binding arbitration, and a no-reprisals clause.

They also won the support of parents, local labor unions, and businesses.

"It really hurt us to have to go on strike," says crisis committee chair Carol Reynolds, "but we regained our self-respect and feeling that we're important."

ARKANSAS

How do you build a brand new local Association, starting from the ground up? Teachers in the northeastern Arkansas town of Newport are finding out.

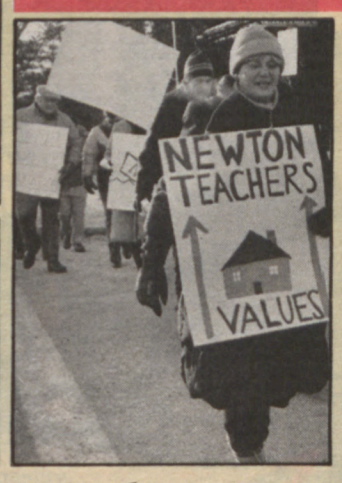
In the early 1970s, when teachers across the country were unifying their state and local Associations with the NEA, Newport was dominated by a superintendent adamantly opposed to the idea of a nationally unified teaching profession.

That superintendent effectively kept unification from taking place in Newport, and any semblance of an organized Association disappeared—until two years ago. When the superintendent retired, Newport school employees began to return to their Association. In 1982, a few individualists signed up. In 1983, they created a full-fledged affiliate of the Arkansas Education Association and NEA.

Newport Education Association membership doubled last year. The local now enrolls almost a third of the several hundred Newport teachers, President Judy Felts reports—thanks largely to Association programs that members can identify with.

Pride-building programs so far have included teacher spots on the local radio station, a weekly "From the Teacher's Desk" column in the daily newspaper, and community outreach services such as an Association advisory to parents on suitable toys for holiday giving.

IN A WELL-TO-DO BOSTON SUBURB



Clockwise from left: Eye-catching crimson bumper stickers display Newton Teachers Association's no-nonsense message; Evelyn Alden delivers a flyer to one of the 30,000 homes the Association visited; Marjorie Montgomery leads line of picketers during mid-January demonstration; voicing NTA's carefully honed positions is local president Tony Croce; hard-hitting message on Association flyer gives community residents a new reason to support public schools.

Pocketbook Issues Hold Sway

The Newton Teachers Association (NTA) has discovered that the same pocketbook issues that fueled Massachusetts' property tax revolt can also help sell community residents on the value of their public schools.

Declining enrollments and 1980's tax-slashing Proposition 2½ have left public services in financial disarray throughout the state—even in affluent suburbs like Newton.

After more than a year of unproductive negotiations, bargaining here finally broke down last fall over the issues of salary, reduction-in-force (RIF) language, and evaluation.

The 850-member NTA decided to launch an information campaign to persuade the community that its contract requests were reasonable. The message: Newton's cherished property values can be attributed in no small part to its nationally renowned schools.

The NTA campaign included regular early morning informational picketing on city sidewalks, teacher attendance at school committee (school board) meetings and public forums, an all-night public sleep-in at Newton North High School, leafleting of public events, and a citywide door-to-door leaflet drop.

The campaign culminated in a candlelight vigil as part of a massive demonstration by teachers, students, and parents before the school committee.

An NTA flyer built a clear case for the relationship between high property values and strong support for public schools. It quoted the president of the local real estate board, who termed Newton's schools "the magnet in attracting homebuyers to this community, thus helping to establish its high property values."

Explains NTA President Tony Croce, "All property owners derive a monetary benefit from the reputation of the school system. We wanted to make a tangible, dollars-and-cents relationship between what we're doing in the classroom and what community residents hold dear."

The strategy apparently worked. At the negotiating session following the public demonstration, an improved contract offer from the school committee led to an immediate settlement. It provides NTA members with salary rate increases that compounded will equal 13.6 percent over the next two years. Besides the salary gains, the Association won many of the changes it sought in RIF language and evaluation procedures.

But Association leaders say the real gain from this winter's community relations effort was in their local's emerging unity. Newton teachers are now determined to continue acting as a unified political force to preserve the quality for which their schools are famous.

State Side

NORTHEAST

Some 2,000 Vermont teachers, school board members, principals, and even a sprinkling of state legislators rallied at the statehouse in Montpelier in early February to voice support for a bill that would shift more of the burden of public education funding from the local to the state level.

The rally—and the legislature's consideration of the Vermont-NEA-initiated bill—were the result of months of intensive lobbying and coalition building. Vermont-NEA is determined to raise the state share of total education costs from its current rock-bottom 28 percent to the national average of 48 percent.

To do so would mean boosting state aid by $113 million from the current $71 million a year—a far cry from the $8 million increase proposed by Gov. Madeleine Kunin.

Vermont-NEA President Maida Townsend told the rallying crowd, "We're sending an unprecedented message to our legislators: it's time to provide adequate support for our schools and to stop bleeding the local property taxpayer dry."

MIDWEST

NEA's state affiliate in Wisconsin has asked a federal court to allow it to intervene in the Milwaukee school board's desegregation lawsuit.

That suit, filed last June, charges the state, 24 suburban Milwaukee school districts, and government officials with cooperating to racially segregate public schools in the metropolitan area.

The Wisconsin Education Association Council (WEAC) represents teachers and other school employees in 22 of the 24 defendant suburban districts.

In the event that the federal court considering the suit orders a remedy that includes creation of a single, giant metropolitan school district, WEAC President Jim Blank explains, "the potential for job loss, transfers, reassignments, layoffs, and changes in working conditions" will threaten 4,500 WEAC members in the Milwaukee suburbs.

WEAC hopes its participation in the suit will encourage settlement without lengthy and expensive court proceedings.

"But whether this case is settled or goes to trial, WEAC's goals are quality education, equal opportunities in employment, and the removal of barriers to effective voluntary desegregation," stresses Evan Brickner, a Wauwatosa teacher who chairs the WEAC committee formed to respond to the desegregation conflict.

REAL REFORM AT LAST?

New Era Dawns In Puerto Rico

Los maestros de Puerto Rico esperan una nueva etapa libre de discriminación e injusticia en el sistema de enseñanza que se halla plagado de problemas en esta isla.

AMPR

Puerto Rico's new education secretary—an Association official—has pledged to end years of stagnation in the commonwealth's schools. Decay and disrepair in the lunchroom at left are all too typical.

Teachers in Puerto Rico are looking forward to a new era of freedom from discrimination and unfairness in the problem-plagued school system of this island commonwealth.

The recent turnover in Puerto Rico's government has set the stage for a series of education reforms that have been discussed for many years with little or no action. Newly elected Governor Rafael Hernandez Colon, who took office in January, has appointed as his secretary of education Awilda Aponte Roque—the executive director of the NEA affiliate here since 1973.

The 20,000 members of that affiliate—the Asociacion de Maestros de Puerto Rico (AMPR)—have received NEA assistance over the years in organizing, public relations, and community consciousness-raising on education issues.

An in-depth NEA-AMPR investigation in 1978 resulted in a report that spotlighted the virtual breakdown of the education system in Puerto Rico: the widespread demoralization of teachers, the deteriorating school buildings, the political manipulation of teacher appointments and assignments.

"We're entering a new era," says Jose Eligio Velez, AMPR president. "Education funds will be allocated in such a way that all the money will go to children and teachers."

In the past, Eligio Velez explains, too many dollars were siphoned off for administrative matters, and there was "much waste of money."

Aponte Roque's announced priorities as she takes over responsibility for the 65,000 employees and over 800,000 students in Puerto Rico's centralized education system:

- ► Modernizing and reforming the curriculum
- ► Allocating funds fairly
- ► Involving the local municipal governments more deeply in maintenance of the schools—using commonwealth funds but with greater pinpointing of responsibility
- ► Encouraging greater parental involvement in school operations.

Teacher salaries, which now range from $685 to $800 a month, are also scheduled for a thorough review.

PACIFIC

The fate of education in state legislatures was at the top of many West Coast NEA affiliates' lists of concerns during recent months.

The governors of both California and Nevada proposed budgets that would significantly increase state funding for education. Calling their governor's proposal for a $1.3 billion increase a "good, strong opening bid," **California** Teachers Association activists have concentrated their lobbying on winning more money for specific school programs.

Nevada's pro-education Gov. Richard Byrne proposed a 25 percent increase in education funds over the next two years. "We're playing catch-up in this state," says Sue Strand, Nevada State Education Association president. "Our task has been to persuade legislators that the governor's proposal is the absolute *minimum*. Our schools desperately need funds if we're to achieve excellence."

Public schools in **Montana** and especially Idaho face tougher times. While the Montana governor has proposed a special "excellence fund;" his general education budget falls far short of what's needed. The Montana Education Association is active in a coalition of state education groups that have taken a united stand—telling legislators that state education funding must rise 14 percent over the next two years just to "hold the line."

In **Idaho,** a group of superconservative legislators has been busy attacking the public schools via the Idaho Education Association. In addition to proposing budgets that would keep the state near the bottom on all national rankings of expenditures for education, legislators are suggesting bills to allow tax credits for private school tuition and gut teachers' collective bargaining and tenure rights.

IEA has so far managed to derail the most damaging of these proposals.

WEST

"Reforming the reforms"— especially the one-time competency test mandated for all Texas public school teachers and administrators by June 1986—is the major lobbying task facing members of the Texas State Teachers Association this spring.

The test, which will determine whether current educators can keep their jobs and certificates, is opposed not only by TSTA but by most educator organizations in the state.

"The place to screen teachers is *before* they're certified," says TSTA President Becky Brooks. "So we're supporting a bill that would exempt certified teachers."

The competency test requirement was included in HB 72, the massive reform law passed by the Texas legislature last summer. If the legislature does not exempt current teachers from the requirement, TSTA might take legal action.

MID-ATLANTIC

The Kentucky Education Association (KEA) is proud of Kentucky's late member of Congress, Carl Perkins, who chaired the House Education and Labor Committee for 17 years and was the driving force behind a number of major federal aid-to-education bills.

And Perkins was proud of his alma mater, Settlement School in Hindman, Ky. So to honor Perkins, KEA has launched a fundraising drive to add money to Perkins' endowment fund for the school.

Although Settlement is a private school, it works with the public schools to provide programs not otherwise available. Settlement teachers, for example, visit public schools to teach art, music, and folk crafts. The school offers a Montessori preschool, help for dyslexics, adult basic education, and summer tutoring. It also houses the county library.

Perkins set up the endowment in October 1983, 10 months before his death. KEA's goal is to have each of its 30,000 members contribute one dollar to the fund.

NEA TEACHER-CERTIFIED SOFTWARE

Taming the Computer Invasion

Mark Peterson

If your school district's been "computerizing" in unpredictable and not always productive ways, you're far from alone. NEA members from coast to coast report that as districts have scrambled aboard the microcomputer bandwagon, they've sometimes neglected necessary planning. And that's spelled problems for classroom teachers.

"So far, computers haven't helped us teach better," says Jennifer Salls, math department chair at McQueen High School in Reno, Nevada. "We're so busy as it is, and then someone comes along and shoves a computer at us and says 'this is going to make your life easier.' But who has time to learn to use it, research what software to buy, and try to maintain it?"

The initial awe over microcomputers has worn off. There are now at least 550,000 of them in the nation's classrooms. At least 20 states now have some form of computer literacy mandate. But as teachers and students have become more sophisticated about this new technology, they've begun to demand that it produce some tangible improvements in learning.

The pitfalls are legion: lack of funding for computer maintenance and supplies. . . poor choice of hardware (machinery) and software (the programs that drive the computer). . . inadequate in-service training. . . no agreement on what constitutes the "computer literacy" that the public demands.

The Association's desire to help tame the computer invasion in ways beneficial to teachers and students sparked the 1983 formation of the NEA Educational Computer Service (ECS), sponsored jointly by NEA, the National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, and Cordatum, Inc.

ECS zeroes in on the key variable in the computer quality equation: educational software. It screens software and identifies what's really schoolworthy from among the thousands of commercial programs now on the market. Using some 100 published criteria, a panel of more than 50 expertly trained NEA members at all teaching levels first screens software for technical reliability, instructional soundness, and ease of use.

Programs that pass move on to the acid test: teachers—usually at three different schools—try out each one in their classrooms, with their students.

About half the software the Service has reviewed so far has failed to make the grade. But some 300 programs have—and may now carry the "NEA Teacher-Certified" mark of quality.

Each of these programs—ranging from preschool math and reading readiness to secondary social studies software—is described in *The Yellow Book of Computer Products for Education*, which is revised annually (*see box below*).

NEA member Charles Doebler, a science teacher at Albert Einstein High School in Kensington, Md., is one of the Service's software reviewers. "I've seen firsthand that poor quality software can break all the instructional rules and seriously undermine the best efforts of the teacher," he says. "Good software, on the other hand, enhances the teacher's work."

Few teachers have the time to do the research required to find good software, with the offerings changing so rapidly. That's why teachers determined to get through the software selection maze are turning to the *Yellow Book*.

"ECS is the way teachers can influence software development," adds NEA President Mary Hatwood Futrell. "When software publishers recognize that teachers are making *informed* decisions about software selection, publishers will have to pay attention to our evaluation criteria. I hope that our members will subscribe to and use the *Yellow Book* for guidance in spending precious education dollars."

Meanwhile, for those schools still trying to decide which computer to buy, the *Yellow Book* can serve yet another function: helping to make sure whatever hardware purchased is compatible with the programs teachers will want to run. Because not all computers can run all programs, ECS Director Larry Fedewa explains, "once you've considered systematically how you'd like to use your computer—for drill and practice, for teaching students to program, for word processing, or whatever—and have learned from the *Yellow Book* about the sort of software programs that match your needs, you've already narrowed your hardware choices considerably."

Obviously, the *Yellow Book* won't solve every problem facing teachers as they negotiate the rocky terrain of technological change. But it does represent a step, through collective action, toward putting teachers in control of their destiny.

By standing up to software manufacturers and saying only the best will do for this nation's students, teachers will continue to serve as arbiters of quality in education. They can make the crucial point that technological change and the drive for excellence in the nation's classrooms are not mutually exclusive.

Because if teachers don't, who will?

—Vicky Lytle

More Resources

The Computer and Education. Marvin N. Tolman and Ruel A. Allred. 1984. (Stock no. 1061-2-00-D; 32 pp; $2.50. Order from NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516.)

Computers in the Classroom. Henry Kepner, 1982. (Stock no. 1825-7-00-D; 160 pp; $7.95. Order from NEA Professional Library at address above.)

Computers in the Classroom: A Survival Guide for Teachers. Stephen Radin and Fayvian Lee. Science Research Associates, Inc., 1984.

The Educator's Unauthorized Microcomputer Survival Manual. Marcella D. Pitts. Council for Educational Development and Research, Washington, D.C., 1982.

Guide to the Software Assessment Procedure. Lists exact criteria used by the NEA Educational Computer Service for "NEA Teacher Certified" software. Four documents, each $5: Courseware, Applications Service, Combination Products, and Computer Interactive Video Courseware. (Order from NEA Educational Computer Service, P.O. Box 70267, Washington, DC 20088.)

High Tech for Schools: Problems and Solutions. Shirley Boes Neill. American Association of School Administrators, 1984.

Microcomputers in the Classroom: Dreams and Realities. Henry Jay Becker. International Council for Computers in Education, University of Oregon, 1982.

Putting Computer Power in Schools: A Step-by-Step Approach. Jerry L. Patterson and Janice H. Patterson. Prentice-Hall, 1983.

A Teacher's Companion to Microcomputers. John Niman. Lexington Books, 1985.

Let Your Fingers Do the Walking

Annual subscriptions to *The Yellow Book of Computer Products for Education*, including summer supplement and periodic product bulletins, may be ordered for $30 each—or for the special discount rate of six subscriptions for $100—from the NEA Educational Computer Service, P.O. Box 70267, Washington, DC 20088, or by phoning toll-free 800/NEA-NEA7.

Beware the Seven Deadly Software Sins!

As teachers and parents have already discovered, not all "educational" computer programs are fit for inquiring young minds. While commercial software is gradually improving, too many programs still suffer from one or more of these fatal flaws:

1. *They're boring.* The novelty of using computers will wear off with your students long before the warranty expires. If a software program makes their eyes glaze over, you've lost the electronic edge.

2. *They're pedagogically inept.* Even as a student teacher you wouldn't have thought to teach the structure of Spenserian sonnets without first introducing the concepts of rhythm and rhyme. Yet some programmers seem committed to instructional sequences apparently derived from hours of viewing "The Twilight Zone."

3. *The spelling and syntax are embarrassing.* It becomes obvious that the programmer may have been a whiz at computerese, but English wasn't his or her strong point. When your students start repeating the program's bad grammar, punctuation, and spelling, you eat the cost and toss the software.

4. *Say what?* Instructions on how to run the program are limited, difficult to understand, or nonexistent. You haven't felt this frustrated since you puzzled over assembly directions on your first box kite.

5. *They masquerade as ageless wonders.* It's often not clear what age group the program is geared for. Your mother may have told you age is just a state of mind, but a program with a target audience of age six through adult will prove that mama wasn't always right.

6. *They're one-way streets (and often dead ends).* The feedback both you and your students need to gauge progress isn't available. If the program can't mimic your snappy rejoinders, students will view the computer as a conversational dud—and lose their motivation to learn.

7. *The content's inaccurate.* No matter how animated and well organized a program may be, if its facts are wrong it's *junk.* Electronic junk is as odious as nonelectronic junk, but it costs more and sells better.

RESOURCES

TV Tips

NEA recommends the following broadcasts to members, students, and their families in the weeks ahead.

Yeh Shen: A Chinese Cinderella—*CBS-TV, Saturday, April 6; check local listings for time.* Animated story based on the book of the same name by Ai-Ling (another in the continuing "Storybreak" series).

Wallenberg: A Hero's Story—*NBC-TV, Monday and Tuesday, April 8-9, 9-11 p.m. ET.* Two-part miniseries about Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat credited with saving the lives of some 100,000 Jews in Budapest, Hungary, during the final months of World War II. Richard Chamberlain stars as Wallenberg, who was taken prisoner by the Russians.

Space—*CBS-TV, Sunday, April 14, 8-11 p.m. ET; Monday, April 15, 9-11 p.m. ET; Tuesday, April 16, 8-11 p.m. ET; Wednesday, April 17, 8-10 p.m. ET; and Thursday, April 18, 8-11 p.m. ET.* 13-hour miniseries

In "Wallenberg: A Hero's Story," an April 8-9 NBC miniseries, Georgia Slowe (rear center) portrays Hannah, Mark Rylance (right) portrays Nikki, and Richard Chamberlain (below) stars.

based on James Michener's best-selling fictional account of the human drama behind America's conquest of space. Another in the Library of Congress "Read More About It" series.

Backwards: The Riddle of Dyslexia—*ABC-TV, Wednesday, April 17; check local listings for time.* Afterschool Special about a junior high student who covers up his reading difficulties by being disruptive in class, until finally he's diagnosed as dyslexic and given special help.

Heroes and the Test of Time—*PBS, Tuesday, April 23, 8-9 p.m. ET.* Smithsonian World spotlights 19th century American artist Thomas Eakins and the myths and realities surrounding General Custer and the Battle of Little Big Horn.

Idea Exchange

Mathematical Bingo

Math drills aren't always popular with students, but Sandra Gardner says her fourth graders at Timothy Elementary School in Athens, Georgia, look forward to their games of "Matho"—a version of bingo where kids fill their cards by working math problems.

Gardner prepares for the game by giving each student a sheet of paper containing a big square divided into 25 smaller squares, in rows of five. The middle square is marked "free."

Gardner then writes about 50 answers to math problems on the blackboard. Students choose 24 answers at random and write one in each square on their boards. Gardner then begins reading math problems aloud, one by one. Students who find the answer on their cards put a chip in the correct square.

The first student to cover five squares in a vertical, horizontal, or diagonal row shouts out "Matho!" After Gardner checks the student's work to make sure all answers match problems the class has worked, the winner gets a small prize.

"Usually we keep playing to find additional winners," Gardner reports.

Wri(gh)ting Biography

During her years as a high school English teacher, Marjorie Malin of Sigourney, Iowa, livened up her literature classes with creative writing. She asked students to choose a biography and fictionalize a short section of it—usually a major event in the subject's life.

They could add the person's thoughts or conversations or use any other device to make the person come alive.

"Some students became totally immersed in the biographical personality and came up with some very creative ideas," Malin recalls—for example, a letter from one of the Wright brothers to his parents about his first flight.

This exercise, Malin says, helped students differentiate between nonfiction and fiction—between straight biography and biographical novels—and to realize that the people they read about in history were real people with dreams and doubts of their own.

'Literate' Chairs

Another teacher who puts games to good use in the classroom is Joan Macey, an art teacher at Benjamin Franklin Elementary in Binghamton, New York. When she taught third grade, she played a variation of a math drill game called "Conductor," using flash cards with words she wanted students to recognize quickly. Here's how the game works.

One child begins by standing at the front or end of a row at the desk of another student, to form a pair. When the teacher shows them a flashcard, the first in the pair to give the word wins the round and moves on to stand by the next child in the row.

The game continues with successive flashcards. Whenever the student standing is the first to get the word, he or she walks to the next desk to form a new pair. When the student sitting gets it first, he or she gets up and goes to stand by the next desk, giving up his or her seat to the other child.

If neither student knows the word, either go on to another word or ask someone else in the class to volunteer the correct answer and to replace one of the pair.

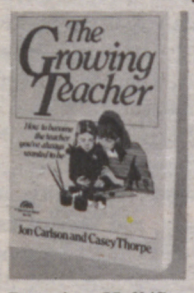
The musical chairs format keeps a class's rapt attention—and gives the kids a welcome chance to get out of their seats.

The better players soon build reputations by chalking up long consecutive wins, Macey adds.

Free or Inexpensive

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Growing Teacher. Jon Carlson and Casey Thorpe.



Tells how to analyze your own and your students' behavior for better results all around. 148 pp. $6.95. At bookstores or prepaid from Prentice-Hall/Spectrum, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

WRITING

Growing Up Writing: Sharing with Your Children the Joys of Good Writing. Linda Leonard Lamme for *Highlights for Children* magazine. Describes how parents can deliberately integrate writing into family activities. 224 pp. $8.95. At bookstores or by mail (add 50¢ for postage and handling) from Acropolis Books, Ltd., 2400 17th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009.

DISCIPLINE

Disruptive Student Behavior in the Classroom. Kevin J. Swick. A new edition of a "What Research Says to the Teacher" bestseller. Basic round-up of actions teachers can take to promote positive student behavior, with added material on parent cooperation. 32 pp. Stock no. 1064-7-D. $2.50. NEA Professional Library, P.O. Box 509, West Haven, CT 06516 (or order via the postage-paid reply envelope following page 112 in the 1984-85 *Today's Education* annual).

GUIDANCE

How To Get A's in School. Herriot Tabuteau. A high school junior (who arrived—speaking no English—in the U.S. from Haiti six years ago) shares specific suggestions for mastering schoolwork in elementary and secondary academic subjects. 90 pp. $6 ($7 by first-class mail), prepaid by check or money order to LBT Publisher, P.O. Box 964, New York, NY 10150.

SCIENCE

The Universe in the Classroom (an astronomy newsletter for teachers). Astronomical Society of the Pacific and the American Astronomical Society. Contains nontechnical articles, classroom activities, and suggestions for written and audiovisual resources about astronomy. Quarterly. Free to teachers and librarians who write on school stationery (specify grade level). Astronomical Society of the Pacific, Teachers Newsletter, 1290 24th Ave., San Francisco, CA 94122.

MUSIC

A Little Schubert. Story and art by M.B. Goffstein. Music arranged by Richard Woitach. A child's biography of composer Franz Schubert, with simplified arrangements of six of his 12 "Noble Waltzes." 33 pp. $6.95. David R. Godine, Publisher, 306 Dartmouth St., Boston, MA 02116.

CITIZENSHIP/VALUES

Kind News. National Association for the Advancement of Humane Education (NAAHE). A newspaper filled with animal stories designed to increase children's respect for nonhuman species and the environment. Quarterly. Package of 35 subscriptions, $10 a year. Specify Level I (grades 1-3) or Level II (grades 4-6). Kind News Service, NAAHE, Box 362, East Haddam, CT 06423.

HANDICAPPED

The Wheelchair Child: How Handicapped Children Can Enjoy Life to Its Fullest. Philippa Russell. Describes the problems likely to arise with wheelchair-bound children and suggests how to contend with them. 262 pp. $9.95. At bookstores or prepaid from Prentice-Hall/Spectrum, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

HEALTH

The Winner: Teaching Values Young Lives Depend On. Narcotics Education Association. A monthly periodical designed to expose the dangers of substance abuse to students in grades 3-6. Nine issues per year (Sept.–May). Price per student subscription, $6.50 (1-24 copies); $6.25 (25-99 copies); $6 (100-249 copies). Teaching guide, $3 per subscription. The Winner, 6830 Laurel St., N.W., Washington, DC 20012.

Meet:

Sunderland/PHOTOSTAFF Inc.

One Job, A Dozen Careers

Thanks to a job-sharing provision negotiated by Colorado's Jefferson County Education Association, JCEA members Steve Ross and Sylvia Toy are sharing a sixth grade teaching position this year at Weber Elementary School in Arvada, northwest of Denver. They're one of 15 pairs of JCEA members—but the only married couple—now sharing jobs.

With extra free time, Ross and Toy are pursuing more intensively their various interests as political consultant, coach, graduate student, Association activist, software developer, and TV producer. NEA Today *staff writer Nancy Needham recently interviewed them about their unusual year.*

Do you plan your teaching together ?
***Sylvia*:** No. We divide the work by subject. Essentially we're sharing my regular sixth grade position, which also has responsibility for teaching science to fifth and sixth graders. (A teacher with a one-year term contract has Steve's regular second-grade job this year.)

So Steve teaches math, reading, and spelling to our class in the morning. In the afternoon I teach three science sessions—to our own class, to another sixth grade, and to a fifth grade.

Do you do a lot of comparing notes on the kids?
***Steve*:** Yes, especially when it comes to report cards, giving grades for attitude. Or with discipline—sometimes I may need to become aware of a situation, or Sylvia will. Of course, it's easier to talk because we're married.

Is it harder than in other years to put work behind you at the end of the day?
***Sylvia*:** Sometimes, but because of all the other things we're involved in, it's not so bad. There are times when we might get more engrossed with a student's problem than if only one of us were the teacher—because two of us are affected by the same information.

Are you each on half pay?
***Steve*:** Yes, but to avoid getting half the regular fringe benefits we pay extra for full medical insurance coverage, for example.

What prompted you to job-share?
***Sylvia*:** I'm interested in becoming an athletic director. To do that I need a master's in administration, which I'm working on this year.
***Steve*:** I wanted time off to find out where video technology is going. A colleague and I made a videotape two years ago on computer education for the school district.

I wanted to make a documentary of my own this year about the Jefferson County school board. I also wanted to finish certification requirements for teaching secondary social studies.

So I'm studying and also working as an intern with a Denver PBS show called *State Line*, which covers the state capitol. Not only do I see how the legislature works, but I'm discovering how the media—specifically television—decide to cover events.

I assume that topic interests you, Steve, because you're also a political activist?
Yes. I've long been involved in JCEA's political activities.

Last fall, 12 weeks before the election, the campaign of one of our pro-education Democratic candidates for the legislature developed problems. Because I had free time, I became the campaign manager. We raised $29,000 and did very well—but we didn't win; 1984 wasn't a good year for Democrats in Jefferson County.

Have you always been a political junkie?
My high school social studies teachers had us do political simulations of a Republican National Convention and a Senate committee hearing, which got me interested.

I was even supposed to be a Young Democrat delegate to the 1968 national convention, but they pulled all our credentials because they were afraid of demonstrations.

Did that turn you off?
No, earlier that year at the Democratic state convention in Iowa, where I lived then, I had seen that a few people who knew what they were doing and were motivated could make a difference. Some of us had introduced an 18-year-old vote plank and got it passed.

***Sylvia*:** Something like that happened to me when I was a delegate to last year's NEA Representative Assembly. I got a New Business Item passed that put the NEA on record as being in favor of prosecution of persons who make racial assaults on Asian/Pacific Islanders.

I was reacting to the case of the two men who got drunk and beat an Asian American to death, but got very short prison sentences for it. They claimed Asians were taking American jobs. My special concern about the case arises from my own ethnic background. My mother is Hispanic, but on my father's side my family is Chinese.

Sylvia, what got you involved in Association affairs?
My need for support for introducing ethnic studies in my classroom. I was hired under an affirmative action plan, but when I tried to incorporate my ethnicity into the curriculum I ran into flak from administrators for "deviating from the curriculum."

I wanted to convey, in teaching American history, for example, that we *all*—not just the European explorers and colonizers—discovered America. I also thought Mexican *American* culture should have a place in the curriculum, not just Mexican culture as a foreign culture.

I joined JCEA's minority educators committee, and we've brought materials on Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics into the schools. A new district task force of minority teachers will, I hope, work out some of these problems.

Are you still in favor of affirmative action?
Yes, it gives students an opportunity to know well someone of different ethnic origins than they're used to—someone they wouldn't otherwise have known.

The "carrot" that encourages members of minority groups to work in Jefferson County is the guarantee of a continuing contract as long as enrollments don't decline. New teachers usually have to start with contracts good for a specific term.

Why do you want to become an athletic director?
When I was in high school, they didn't know how to train women athletes. As a result I've had lots of leg injuries from running.

I decided coaching would be the first step. I started checking with nearby high school athletic directors for openings for girls' soccer coaches—I had been coaching girls' soccer outside school. I lost one job to a man who wasn't even a teacher or on the district payroll.

I talked to a UniServ staff member about it, and he interceded for me, letting the district know I was serious about coaching. Eventually I got an offer from Arvada High School. I'm in my first year of coaching girls soccer there.

What will you try to accomplish for women athletes?
To prevent injuries, I'm having the girls do weight training—I reserved time in the weight room for them as soon as I got the job. I also want to give them occupational information about what you can do with an interest and background in sports—such as write for sports magazines or newspapers or sell sporting goods. Things I wish I had known.

Steve, I'm told you teach the professional politicians how to use computers in campaigns.
Well, I have taken existing software, modified it, and put together the parts that have applications to politics.

For example, in a political campaign, some precincts are worth more effort than others. You can figure out which ones they are by analyzing past election data. Spreadsheet software, originally designed for accounting, can be modified to analyze that information very quickly and help you target resources efficiently.

Where did you learn programming?
I like to know how things work, so when the district got computers, I taught myself LOGO. I now have an Apple IIc at home.

What will you do next year?
The contract would allow us to share the job one more year, but we can't afford to live on half pay any longer. Even so, it's been a terrific experience.

RURAL SCHOOLS . . .

OFF THE BE

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson

BUT 'HOME' TO

Steeped in tradition, closely reflecting the values and ideals of the communities they serve, America's rural schools don't often make the headlines. But they're educating about a fourth of the nation's public school students. And today's reform winds are sweeping through these schools too.

Rural America lives—and so do its schools.

No, it's certainly not the rural America of say 20 or even 10 years ago. Much of what used to be rural is now metropolitan—rich farmland sold to the highest bidder, blacktopped over, defoliated—rural never again.

The rural communities that remain—tucked away in the nooks and crannies of America—have wonderful names like Possum Lake, Greenup, Pulaski, McGuffey, White Bird, and Little Farms.

If you can find these towns, you can't miss the schools—usually off main street, near the post office, convenience store, gas station, and town hall. The schools—home base to 10 million kids and their teachers—remain the cornerstones of rural life.

Sometimes—often after a couple of school districts consolidate—a new school ends up out on a hill, or plopped down on a flat piece of farmland equidistant between towns. To hang on to their identities, two districts often compromise: one gets the elementary school, the other the high school.

Inside, the older schools have a kind of homey ambiance. Floors smoothed over the years by hundreds of walking, sliding, and skidding youngsters; hallway walls filled with memorabilia of quasi-famous graduates and a trophy case of metal memories; classrooms whose pockmarked walls bear witness to the thousands of test papers displayed and the changing themes of instruction.

Whether old or new, all rural schools *feel* rural. Kids still wear school jackets with athletic letters sewn to the breast pocket; they still care about winning blue ribbons for the best-bred steer at the county fair; most still arrive and depart by bus; basketball and football still draw huge crowds; teachers still expect a good many students to be absent come planting or harvest time.

Rural teachers? Oh, they're a versatile crew, able to handle as diverse a workload as any teacher could possibly want. The social studies teacher, for example, is likely to be the entire department. And because of the small size of the faculty, each teacher must handle more of the extracurricular jobs—coaching, directing the school play, taking tickets to sporting events, even driving the bus a time or two.

To rural teachers, playing all the roles goes with the territory.

That's true for the rest of the educational family as well. There are few heating and air conditioning, electrical, or plumbing specialists in rural schools, for example. Instead, maintenance and custodial staff do it all—from routine cleaning to technical repairs.

And bus drivers, whose daily task is to navigate the narrow, winding rural roads, often do double duty as advisors to the district superintendent who's trying to decide whether to call off school during bad weather.

If you're an Association leader, rural schools require even more ingenuity.

"We have a terrible time getting our members together, especially during the winter months," notes Judy Weyenberg, who heads the Central Idaho Education Association from Grangeville, where she teaches sixth grade. Wyenberg's 2,000-student school district—about the size of Massachusetts—borders Washington and Oregon on the west and Montana on the east; the 85 Association members are scattered throughout the district.

The art of teaching in a rural school is to get the most out of every resource and not worry about what you don't have.

Enter Clarence-Lowden High School in rural eastern Iowa, a half hour or so out of Cedar Rapids. Social studies teacher David Hunt's just been shot—by the principal. Hunt's students are out of their seats, horrified.

It's OK. David Hunt is a bit of a showman, and being shot is just part of the drama—just his way of demonstrating fast-draw techniques of the Wild West for his American history class.

Hunt *is* social studies at Clarence-Lowden High. He teaches everything that fits under the social studies umbrella—including, this school year alone, classes in ancient history, modern world history, American history, Civil War to World War II, World War II only, the 1950's and 60's, sociology, modern problems, and government.

"It's difficult keeping abreast of all these subjects," Hunt admits, "but I never get stale the way I would presenting the same material period after period. And the school district's given me wide latitude to introduce new subjects as well."

On the front wall of Hunt's classroom is an absolute maze of *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News & World Report* covers—maybe 30 or 40 showing, and another whole layer underneath those. If Hunt finds himself teaching a unit on, say, the Nixon years, in an instant he can point to cover photos of Watergate defendants John Dean and John Mitchell, or former Vice-President Spiro Agnew. Seeing these people's faces makes history a whole lot more meaningful than rote memorization of their names.

Or say Hunt's discussing archeology in his ancient history class. No problem—no need to go to some dig site in Peru. His class found the location of the 70-year-old dump site in the town of Clarence. Everyone had fogotten that, and the students dug up some pretty interesting things belonging to their ancestors. It's not ancient civilization, but it is history.

David Hunt's classroom is partly a theater production: a director and his players. Learning is definitely going on. And David Hunt likes what he does, where he does it.

Ingenuity and independence are part and parcel of rural schools, but they don't solve every problem.

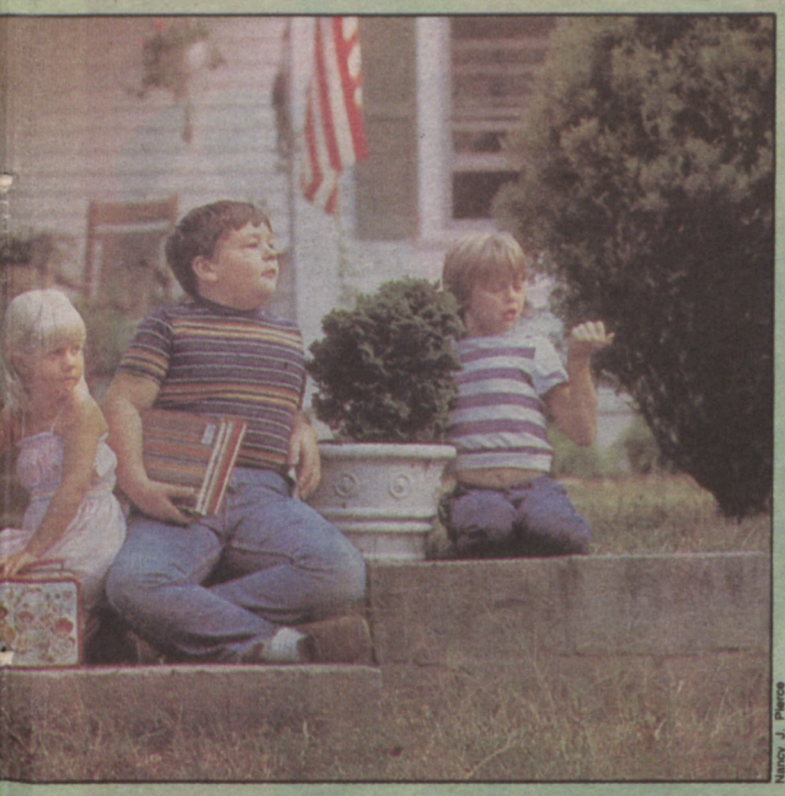
The consolidation of rural school districts that peaked in the 1950s is still going on, and it's an experience many rural communities find unpleasant.

Brewster (Minn.) teacher Evonne Seivert—whose teaching load covers earth science to civics to consumer finance—says rural districts are loathe to merge, even when finances dictate it.

"There's an attachment to these schools," notes Seivert. "Several genera-

. . . GUARDIANS OF TRADITION

EATEN PATH



Nancy J. Pierce

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson

Mark Peterson

10 MILLION KIDS

tions passed through those same doors."

Seivert's K-12 school of 300 students is right now in the throes of partial consolidation. In the present "pairing state," students from Brewster play on the same athletic teams with a neighboring school. A number of students are bused round-robin-like from one school to another to take certain courses.

Brewster still retains its school, but it's not the way it used to be, when Brewster had its Bulldogs moniker. Now Brewster kids are Raiders, a name chosen by the two districts with which they're paired.

For school employees, consolidation means bargaining a whole new agreement with a new school administration. That includes new policies on seniority, operating procedures, salary schedule, and especially staffing requirements. Quite often administrators see in consolidation a chance to reduce costs by dismissing faculty from each district.

Have America's rural kids and their families changed much over time? Part of the answer seems to lie with the students' parents and their work.

Paul Wrege (*above right*), who's taught vocal music in the Braham, Minn., schools for 24 years, has seen a change in student attitudes as more and more parents began commuting to jobs in the Twin Cities, roughly an hour south of Braham. These parents tend to spend less time with their children—and have less time for school activities—than those who still farm in the community.

To overcome this problem, each Braham teacher is assigned responsibility for 15 students. The idea is for the teacher-advisor to consult with the entire faculty on the progress of these 15 students, then to discuss this report with their parents.

"There's still an intimacy to our schools," says Wrege. "The small size means you can get to know each student quite well. What's changed in recent years is the once very close link between the school and the parents."

The current financial crisis of America's small farms—especially in the grain belt states of Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, the Dakotas, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, and Illinois—is further widening the gap between school and families.

In the 1970s, both large and small farmers enjoyed boom times—their crops drew good prices, their farmland value escalated. But that's all changed. America's 2.4 million farmers now owe around $200 billion, compared to a debt of about $50 billion in the early 1970s. As often as not, public schools are the sites for town meetings where farmers debate the causes of the farmland crunch—and possible solutions.

"There's some tension here, no doubt," says Evonne Seivert of Brewster, Minn., "but I haven't seen it surface in my students, though obviously they're concerned." Seivert's school recently decided against calling off classes so students could attend a rally of farmers at the state capitol in St. Paul—but it did excuse those who wanted to go.

What's clear about the present farm crisis is that the schools will be affected to some degree. Maybe that new levy to pay for building improvements won't pass; salaries might be frozen or only slightly increased; classroom materials might be tougher to get. The schools will probably suffer, right along with the farm families.

That's the thing about rural America: what touches one—the good and the bad—touches all.

—Bill Fischer

School Reform, Country Style

Just like their urban and suburban cousins, rural schools are into reform. Researchers and reformers of all stripes are poking around rural classrooms to see what might be done to improve them.

One such project, sponsored by the Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, is probing student achievement and teacher effectiveness in 17 rural Tennessee counties—hoping, as its publicity statement says, that "findings from the research could have significant impact on education throughout the nation, particularly in many rural schools."

Theodore Sizer, whose book *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* has drawn nationwide notice, has chosen Thayer High, a rural New Hampshire school of 300 students in grades 7-12, to participate in a 10-year demonstration project aimed at totally redesigning the school curriculum with a greater emphasis on basic skills. One of Sizer's recommendations—one-on-one student coaching—is already in place at Thayer.

Besides these individual projects, rural schools have been swept along with statewide reforms.

In South Carolina, for example, an infusion of state aid has helped many poor rural school districts buy new textbooks, raise salaries, and beef up kindergarten and remedial programs. The one negative side effect of the new state dollars is that urban and suburban districts, now that they're once again hiring teachers, may draw off many of those currently employed in rural schools.

In Texas, poorer school districts—many of them rural—benefited from a new state aid package passed by a reform-minded legislature last year.

And the reform movement is beginning to touch off a new call for school consolidations, which had dropped off in recent years. In Iowa, one pending proposal would reduce the number of school districts to roughly one per county—about a fourth of the current total. Nebraska, ranking fourth among states in number of school districts but 37th in enrollment, might also be ripe for consolidation attempts.

Along with these structural changes, various states are revising standards for evaluating teachers. In Georgia (the first state to reform teacher assessment standards in the late 1970s), Lumpkin County Middle School reading teacher Cary Moore welcomes the new emphasis on teacher accountability: "As long as the process is fair, it's fine by me."

Elsewhere, rural educators are pleased with the attention drawn to schools as a result of the reform movement, but they caution against jumping on every reform bandwagon that passes through—particularly through rural areas.

"I think we give a pretty good education here," says Clarence, Iowa, Association member David Hunt. "The staff's a veteran one; we know the students quite well, and our school is one of the smallest to receive North Central Association accreditation."

Rural and *reform* do go together, rural educators seem to be saying—but rural was there first.

—B.F.

People

When folks say Oakton (Va.) High School teacher **Donna Thompson** is "going to the dogs," they're not insulting her. Breeding, training, and showing English springer spaniels has been an important part of her life for the past 15 years.

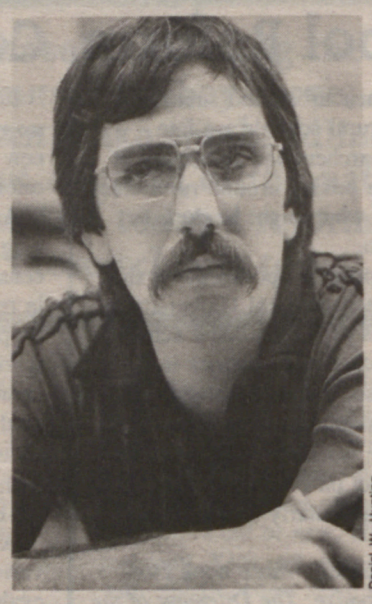
Together with her husband and another partner, she currently owns 27 spaniels, all descended from "Pride," a grand champion. Whenever there's a new litter, Thompson decides on a theme (perfumes, running shoes, spices, motorcycles, whatever) and invites her business education students to suggest appropriate names. Most of them stick even after the pups are sold.

Believing that diet is crucial to dogs' good health and appearance, Thompson avoids commercial pet foods, giving her dogs "mostly natural foods that I prepare myself, with no preservatives."

One treat the dogs enjoy is Thompson's bacon bit cookies. Ingredients include bacon bits, eggs, nonfat dry milk, graham flour, wheatgerm, and cornmeal.

Joe Di Dio

Daniel W. Hunting



Daniel W. Hunting

The seven-month struggle of NEA-New Hampshire activists **Barry LeBarron** (*left*) and **Irv Fountain** (*right*) ended in victory this winter as both a superior court and the state supreme court upheld a labor relations board's order restoring the two nontenured teachers to their positions, awarding them back pay, and purging their files of any negative evaluations.

The two popular and respected teachers were suddenly discharged without explanation from Haverhill Academy Junior High School last March. LeBarron, who was in his third year at Haverhill, taught industrial arts and was president of the Haverhill Education Association (HEA); Fountain, in his fourth year, taught physical education and was vice-president.

At the next board meeting after their contracts were nonrenewed, more than 150 townspeople showed up to demonstrate their opposition to the school superintendent's arbitrary action.

"It was clear that Barry and Irv were fired as a result of their union activity during the latest round of bargaining," notes UniServ Director John Fessenden, who helped the HEA leaders file unfair labor charges against the board.

The board still intends to appeal its case to the state supreme court, despite a vote last fall by townspeople to discontinue legal action.

"I'd say the chances of their winning the appeal are slim to none," says LeBarron, who nonetheless has taken a job in nearby Orford to avoid further harassment.

Michael Munden

In Irish history, shanachies were storytellers who sought to preserve local lore by reciting tales about past customs and events. Dublin (Ohio) High School's *Shanachie*—an annual student-produced magazine—seeks to do the same.

The second edition of *Shanachie*—50 pages of area legends, anecdotes, oldtimers' recipes and home remedies, historical data, and photos—was published recently under the direction of journalism teacher **Scott Weber.**

Students from three senior English classes spent six weeks planning stories, interviewing senior citizens, writing copy, taking photos, and soliciting advertisers.

In the photo, Dublin quiltmaker Polly Richards, 75, shares her craft with Weber and *Shanachie* co-editors Kim Bowers (*left*) and Sheila English.

Bill Stover

They'd spent several summers traveling abroad, so it wasn't out of the ordinary for Association members **Karen** and **Carl Helfrich** to take a three-week archeological study tour in Greece last summer. What was surprising was their arrest on the island of Crete.

The Helfriches—English teachers at Parkway North Senior High School in Chesterfield, Mo.—were among several American teachers on the tour but were the only Americans on board when their ship caught fire.

"It's puzzling how we got accused of arson," Carl says. "The expert who was handling the boat blamed the fire on faulty wiring."

But the ship's owner, who was also a crew member, suggested to authorities that the Helfriches were responsible. They were detained immediately.

"We're not sure when we were officially under arrest," Karen says, "but at some point we were indicted and sent to prison."

The couple posted a large bond and after a month were allowed to leave the prison—but not Greece. They stayed there for another month, returning to the U.S. in August, just in time for school to open.

Carl says he and Karen were thankful to be teachers. "In Greece the police, the courts, and the prison officials all hold teachers in high regard. We were well respected. In fact, the order that allowed us to leave the country stated that we could be trusted to return for trial because of our profession."

The Helfriches' Greek nightmare ended in mid-February, when they were notified that a judge had refused their indictment.

Move over, R2D2. At Mercer Island High School in Seattle, Wash., they call their robots M2I2—and while they wouldn't be much help against Darth Vader, they're perfect for introducing students to the uses of computers in industry.

The six robots are part of the industrial arts program developed by Association member **Malcolm Lindquist**. Including both computer-assisted drafting and robotics (robots controlled by computers), the program is designed to give kids a realistic picture of how today's industry functions.

"We're preparing students for the workplace," Lindquist explains. "And we're providing those who won't go into industry with an understanding of how it works. That's part of a good basic education."

Bill Davidson

Eighty percent of the school's graduates go on to college—yet interest in the industrial arts program is high. "We've also had a good response from parents," says Lindquist. "They're impressed with the education their kids are getting."

Rob Brown

Three years ago, school librarian **Muriel Branch** (*photo, right*) decided to join the list of authors whose books were on her shelves at Thompson Middle School in Richmond, Va.

Together with her cousin **Dorothy Rice** (*left*)—an itinerant teacher of gifted and talented students in Richmond—Branch began researching and writing a biography. The subject: America's first woman to found a bank and serve as its president—Maggie Walker, the daughter of a former slave.

No book had ever been written about Walker, so Branch and Rice spent many hours delving through archives, reading old newspapers, and even interviewing Walker's granddaughters to gather material.

The result of their labors is *Miss Maggie: A Biography of Maggie Lena Walker*, published last July by Marlborough House. "Our book is aimed at an adolescent audience, but people of all ages are enjoying it," reports Branch.

Miss Maggie: A Biography of Maggie Lena Walker may be ordered from Line By Line, P.O. Box 24776, Richmond, VA 23224 (804/232-2200) for $9.95 including postage. Virginians, add 4 percent sales tax.

David Lutman

As a Kentucky farm boy, he played checkers with old bottle caps and grains of corn. Now, when he's not teaching math at North Hardin High School in Hardin County, Association member **Don Lafferty** plays with expensive sets in world tournaments.

Lafferty is world champion of "go-as-you-please" checkers, the form of the game in which players are free to choose their opening moves. He earned the title in 1982 by defeating the defending champion in a 24-game match, winning one game and playing to a draw in the other 23.

Last summer Lafferty successfully defended his title in a 20-game match in his home state, scoring five wins and 15 draws against a challenger from Virginia.

The game tournaments aren't play. "They're hard work," explains Lafferty. "I've seen two people die of heart attacks while competing."

Nevertheless, Lafferty looks forward to achieving another goal in the world of checkers: he'd like to become the American champ in "three-move-restriction" play, where the game's first three moves are determined by drawing cards.

BOOK BEAT

Accept the Moebian Challenge

If you'd like to know what a Moebian style of teaching is and why you might consider adopting it, read Ken Macrorie's latest book, *Twenty Teachers*.

Macrorie is an emeritus professor of English with a special interest in the teaching of writing—an activity he undertakes himself at the Bread Loaf School of English in Vermont. In this book he informally identifies 20 extraordinary teachers at all levels, in public and private schools. They each get a chapter in which they describe their own teaching principles and practices.

In the 20 teachers' classrooms, Macrorie discovers "a pattern that repeats itself again and again": teaching that brings about a "fusing of polar opposites." Learners are both "objective and subjective, not learning only from the experience and ideas of 'authorities' or only from their own experience and ideas, but from setting up a conversation between the two and listening to it."

TWENTY TEACHERS

by Ken Macrorie

(Oxford University Press. 251 pp. $17.95.)

Macrorie calls this pattern the "Moebian" approach, after the twisted loop named for mathematician Augustus Moebius. (Math teachers can show you how, with a mere flick of the wrist, to make what is apparently a two-sided strip of paper into a Moebian, one-sided one.)

A Moebian approach, Macrorie says, joins in a single activity things considered to be opposites—the notions of *reader* and *text* (*subject* and *object*), for example. Teachers who use this approach tend to display common traits, despite the variety of their classroom settings.

Macrorie finds that his 20 teachers all function as "enablers." All hold high expectations for their students—and let them learn by doing something worth doing rather than by completing endless preparatory exercises. The 20 teachers give their students opportunities to think, make choices, and develop responsibilities.

High school physics teacher Don Campbell treats wrong answers in lab problems as a "point of departure." He tells his students: "'*You report what you find out*, not what you think it should be.'" After all, Campbell suggests, maybe the students are using flawed equipment, not incorrect methods.

"The teachers...begin to know the learners, to inquire into the rooms of their minds and experience," Macrorie says. "Both ... begin doing things that build mutual respect." Once this communication is established, teachers functioning as enablers provide learners with creative learning experiences, from which they can produce *good works*. A good work—whether it's a chest of drawers, a composition in a foreign language, or a solo demonstration of geometry proofs—is always something the student has competently crafted.

Sam Bush, woodworking instructor, never assigns projects; he lets his students suggest and create their own. Randy Werner, former physical education teacher, has discovered that discipline is not a problem if the kids are having fun and trying to learn to do something well. Both Vera Milz and Marcia Umland believe kids will learn to write skillfully if they do it for communication purposes.

Though Macrorie says he thinks students should learn both from "authorities" and from personal experience, the emphasis, in my view, seems to be on the latter. He needs to balance his approach. His insistence on the Moebian method almost rules out the sometimes necessary "lecture/test/grade system."

The only teacher in the book who suggests the possibility of overdoing Moebianism is Bill Barker, a college math teacher, who says a school with all math courses taught in the discovery method "might not be a whole lot better than a school which teaches everything in traditional lectures."

Surely, one desirable characteristic of an "enabler" is to include everyone. While the book does encompass a wide range of teaching fields, interestingly, men outnumber women by more than two to one among Macrorie's 20 teachers. None of the 20 is black. And even though Macrorie himself now lives in New Mexico, California is the only state west of the Mississippi that's represented.

These minor problems should not overshadow the value of what is essentially a terrific book. Every educator should read and profit from *Twenty Teachers*. Emulating the techniques Macrorie describes will make any teacher more successful. More important, it will create students who produce good works and find value in learning.

Reviewed by Septima Green, fourth grade honors teacher, Shulkey Elementary, Fort Worth, Texas.

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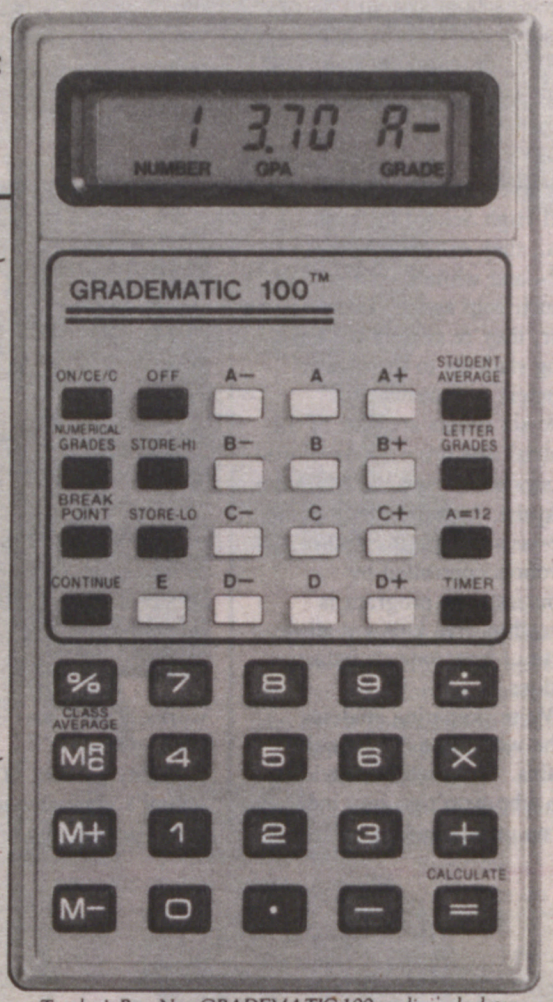
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RESEARCH CLUES

Research Spawns Unexpected Offspring

by Joe Schneider

Serendipity is wonderful. A West Coast educational laboratory, while developing a complex computer-based school achievement program, has stumbled across a simple, sure-fire way to improve primary-level children's reading and math performance.

The Southwest Regional Laboratory (SWRL) initiated a project designed to help the Los Angeles school system improve classroom instruction. The resulting program deserves an article in itself. But the real story is what blossomed out of the research effort—almost as an afterthought.

During the course of the program, the SWRL researchers met with collaborating teachers from the Watts section of Los Angeles. Together they discussed the problems of ensuring that primary students have mastered the "pivotal" skills required for math and reading proficiency. Many of their pupils—the bulk of them Chapter 1 students—hadn't been mastering grade-level material. The farther they moved up the grades, the more they fell behind.

Joe Schneider is executive director of the Council for Educational Development and Research, Washington, D.C.

The teachers suggested how the laboratory might best assist the classroom instructor: get busy and identify the pivotal skills that children need to master at one grade level before moving to the next. Next, develop materials that enable teachers to ensure that their kids actually achieve this mastery.

That's exactly what the SWRL researchers did. Based on their discussions with teachers, the researchers produced short, inexpensive reading and math handbooks for second, third, and fourth grade kids.

The researchers call their materials "instructional risk reduction resources." The teachers just refer to them as "prepbooks." And they're high on them.

The prepbooks don't replace regular instruction—they build on it. Their introduction coincides with the first thorough classroom treatment of pivotal skills. The prepbooks are also especially useful toward the end of the school year, when teachers are trying to determine if their students are prepared to move on to the next grade.

SWRL researchers produced seven math prepbooks. Grade two prepbooks focus on addition/substraction algorithms and addition/subtraction word problems. Grade three has three prepbooks: on basic facts, multiplication, and division; multiplication and division word problems; and fraction recognition. Grade four prepbooks focus on equivalent fractions and multiplication/division algorithms.

The Southwest Regional Laboratory still considers its prepbooks to be in the developmental stage—and not yet ready for a wider market. But for $4 the Laboratory will supply interested NEA members with samples of math and reading prepbooks, plus the accompanying manual for administrators and teachers. Send check or money order to SWRL, 4665 Lampson Ave, Los Alamitos, CA 90720, attn. Linda Wilson.

Each prepbook includes 10 to 12 regular exercises that provide intensive and varied practice on a given skill. The second part of each prepbook includes 10 "mini-exercises." Each consists of problems that give students follow-up practice to ensure they retain the new material.

Both math and reading prepbooks are designed for use after regular textbook instruction. Neither set requires formal teaching; students are able to work mainly by themselves. Nor do the prepbooks require teachers to record students' scores or keep any records.

Reading prepbooks concentrate on helping students master comprehensive skills. Each emphasizes two pivotal skills. Both the second- and third-grade prepbooks deal with "main idea" and "sequence, cause, and effect." Fourth-grade books focus on "main idea, predictions, and conclusions" and "sequence, cause, and effect."

As students move from one grade level to the next, the reading prepbooks become longer and more sophisticated. Vocabulary is more specialized, and the work demands more interpretation and inference. In other words, as the students progress, they have to read more, faster. And better.

Two teachers at 109th Street Elementary School in Watts discovered another use for the prepbooks. To counter the problem of students' forgetting over the summer months much of what they were taught the year before, both teachers have started using the previous grade's prepbooks at the beginning of the school year.

Other teachers have found the prepbooks make good take-home assignments, helping them involve parents in the instruction of their children. The parents quickly see that prepbooks are effective tools for ensuring their children's success in school—and are generally eager to use them.

Los Angeles educators are now asking the SWRL researchers to develop prepbooks for the fifth and sixth grades as well as for subject areas. So far SWRL has agreed to put prepbooks into Spanish, a predominant language in the Watts area.

The SWRL researchers tend to be modest about their prepbooks. They see them as nothing more than a tool for reducing instructional risk and thereby eliminating the likelihood that formal remediation will be needed later.

That's no small contribution, according to teachers at 109th Street Elementary. All we're doing, they say, is what good teachers do anyway. But the prepbooks make that job more manageable.

YOU AND YOUR RETIREMENT

NEA Fights New Cuts in Social Security

This coming August will mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of Social Security—the depression-era federal program designed to protect the nation's elderly and needy.

Seldom in its half-century history has Social Security drawn as much attention—or fire—as during the past four years.

The current debate began in 1981, when President Reagan suggested massive cuts in benefits. Thanks to NEA and others, those proposals were stopped dead in their tracks.

The threat resurfaced in 1982, when the President suggested cutting $110 billion from the Social Security program. Again, NEA helped lead the lobbying effort to thwart the President's attack on the financial security of older Americans.

In 1983 there was a major bipartisan rewrite of Social Security laws to protect the solvency of the fund—ensuring a sound system for as far into the future as the eye can see.

In 1984—during the heat of the presidential campaign, candidate Reagan pledged in a televised debate that he would not promote, condone, or support any attempts to cut or reduce Social Security benefits—an unusual and dramatic change of heart.

But the President's huge tax cuts and enormous military budgets have resulted in an unprecedented $200 billion deficit in the federal budget. That deficit is now bringing on a new round of calls for widespread cuts in domestic expenditures.

Yet these suggested program cuts—when coupled with the recommended increases in defense spending—promise to do very little to actually reduce the deficit. That's left many politicians with the idea that one way to make *quick* reductions in the deficit would be to eliminate this year's scheduled cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in Social Security benefits.

But would freezing 36 million Americans' benefits really help? No, says Robert Ball, a former Social Security commissioner now on the Study Group on Social Security.

"Social Security is not contributing one cent to the deficit," Ball argues. "Social Security will be taking in more than it pays out for several decades."

Meanwhile, to eliminate the cost-of-living adjustment would have a spiraling effect for years to come, points out NEA-Retired President Joe Westbrook of Memphis, Tenn.

"Cutting the COLA is a cut in benefits that continues year after year," Westbrook explains. "Each year that follows, a new COLA is applied to a lower benefit than would otherwise be the case, so that the benefits never catch up with inflation."

Impact on the average Social Security recipient?

To freeze the scheduled cost-of-living adjustment would reduce his or her buying power by $200 to $250 the first year. An estimated 500,000 people would be pushed below the government's official poverty level.

NEA-Retired members throughout the nation are now conducting a letter-writing campaign to members of Congress voicing opposition to the freeze in Social Security benefits. They're following up with lobbying sessions in legislative offices on Capitol Hill and in home districts.

And NEA is a key player in the 100-organization Save Our Security coalition. As we go to press, SOS is gearing up a major campaign to save the COLA.

—Eddy Gattis

"Planning for the Best Years of Your Life": self-help booklets just for NEA-Retired members.

It's That Time of Year

If you're one of those who will soon have put in the required number of years of service for either early or regular retirement, you may be wondering if your financial wherewithal will make retirement affordable. Should you stay on an extra year or two?

One resource that can help as you make these critical decisions is a life membership in NEA-Retired (NEA-R).

NEA-R is *the* organization for retired school employees who want to stay active in their profession, who demand the highest return for their membership dollars, and who care about what happens in public education.

But you don't have to be retired to join. In fact, becoming a life member of NEA-R *before* actually retiring could be an advantage.

Why? Because as a life member, you receive a series of self-help publications tailored to assist you in planning for your retirement years. NEA-R also offers seminars on financial and other issues important to retired—and pre-retired—members.

Joining NEA-R as a life member is easy and economical. It requires a *one-time* payment of $100.

To find out more about the benefits of NEA-R membership, contact your state Association or NEA-Retired, 1201 Sixteenth St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

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SOUNDING BOARD

It's Time Schools Abandoned Obsolete 'Industrial Model'

Factory-like schools may have been acceptable. . . 75 years ago. But real education reform demands a radical reorganization, this California teacher argues.

by Jearald R. Gregg

Alvin Toffler and other social analysts say that today's schools are organized according to models derived from 19th century industry. At least initially, this claim appears bizarre: certainly schools have little, if anything, to do with clanking machinery, blazing furnaces, and sweat-soaked manual laborers.

But the dissimilarities in their activities should not blind us to the basic sameness of organization and problem-solving methods between schools and factories. Attitudes toward personnel are also disturbingly similar: the creative individual has no edge—and is in fact often seen as a source of disruption. The champions of industrial efficiency demand compliant—*not thoughtful*—employees. More than one teacher has discovered this the hard way.

Decision-making authority within an industrial-model organization flows from top to bottom, so that a head and hands analogy is appropriate. Management might be seen as the head that makes decisions, workers as the hands that carry them out.

During the industrial revolution of the 19th century, this system worked very well, given both the nature of the labor to be done (repetitive, simple) and the educational level of employees (low or nonexistent). Unfortunately, the assumption took hold that what worked in an industrial setting could surely be adapted to schools and other social institutions. Indeed, for a time, the industrial model did work in these areas as well.

Proponents of the industrial model for schools see masses of students (raw materials) being taught (processed) by teachers (workers) in schools (factories) overseen by administrators (bosses) acting in accordance with vaguely defined needs of society (market). The organizational forms, patterns of authority, and very often even the terminology found in the schools are drawn from industrial bureaucracies.

When the equivalent of an eighth grade education was all that was required to teach, when enrollments were relatively small, when most teachers remained in the job only until they married, and when subject matter was relatively simple, the head/hands analogy may have been valid. But in the America of the mid-1980s the industrial model no longer works even in industry—let alone in our schools! Its results—in industries as well as schools—are all too evident. Morale and productivity are early casualties.

Inappropriate decision-making models give rise to misguided decisions—and confused relationships. When teachers the "hands" very often know the task better than the "head" does. School managers find themselves in the unfortunate position of having to manage by traditional approaches that simply don't fit current realities. In fact, school administrators may well be doing a job that would be better left undone! Hostility and lost productivity are too often the result.

So the industrial model, as it's currently defined, is no longer an appropriate basis for educational decision-making. Since education is a service enterprise, perhaps it would be worthwhile to look to another service enterprise for a more effective model.

A hospital provides such a model. In theory at least, hospital patients are not processed, but treated. The difference is significant.

But far more important to our purposes is the fact that in a hospital, the individuals who treat patients are assumed to be capable of making and implementing medical decisions. Hospital administrators have no role in either diagnosing illness or treating patients. Their role, rather, is to ensure that both diagnosis and treatment take place under the most favorable conditions possible.

The implications for education—and education workers—are obvious. A hospital or *professional service* model for education could well bring more reasonable organizational forms to schools. This model demands that teachers oversee a community-approved instructional program and that administrators organize all support activities.

The professional service model recognizes the true professional status of teachers, rather than paying it mere lip service. Managers become facilitators rather than bosses. Responsibilities are clearly defined—*and* clearly distinguished.

It's abundantly obvious that the industrial perspective has exhausted itself and is no longer productive. It does not provide solutions to critical problems. The *professional service model*, however, is very much in line with modern management theory and would generate very different and vastly more effective decisions in our schools.

The "Sounding Board" page will appear occasionally in *NEA Today*, as a forum for individual members' opinions on the crucial issues facing American education.

Association member Jearald R. Gregg teaches psychology, government, and economics at Cypress High School in California's Anaheim Union High School District.

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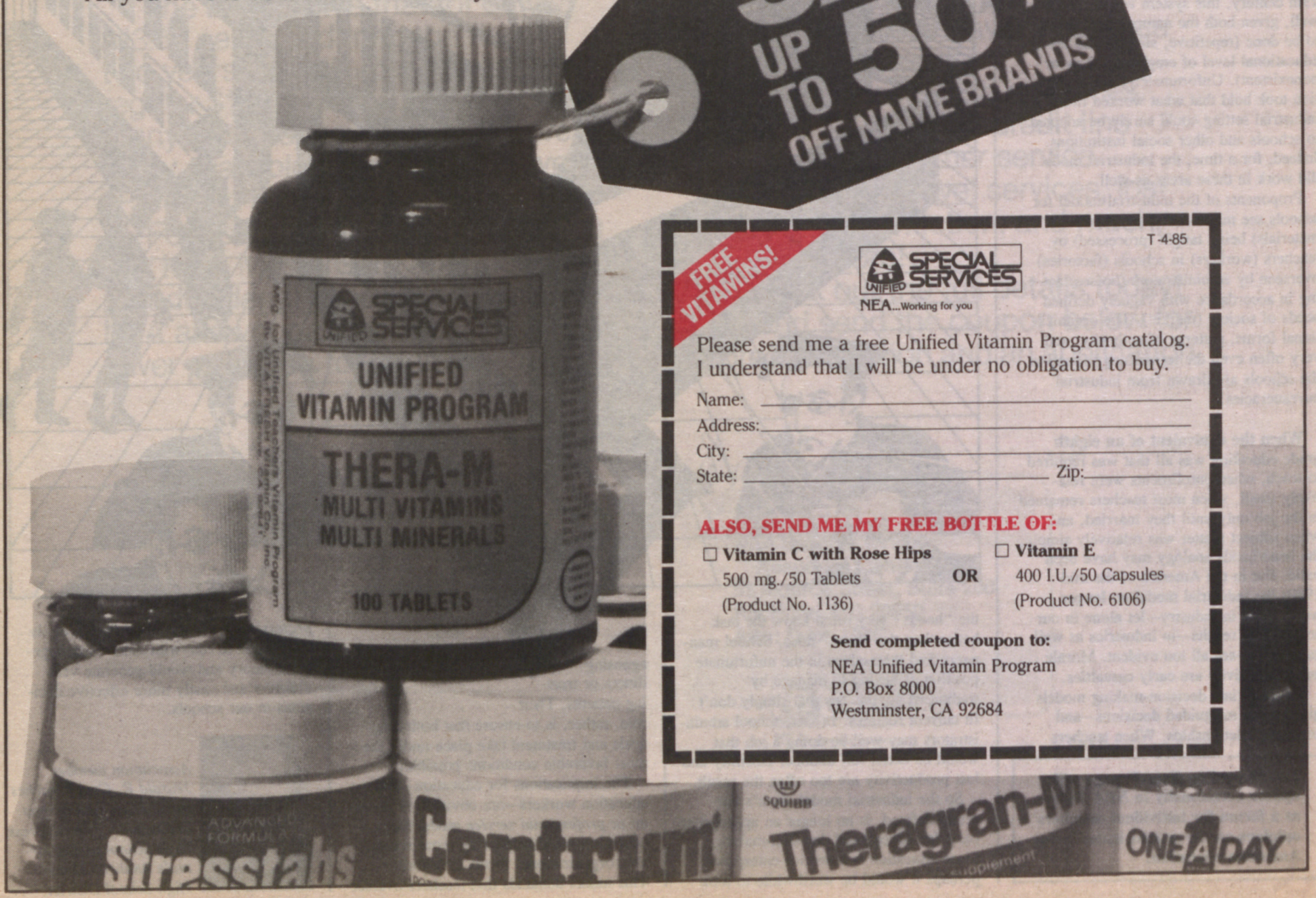

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If you're really interested in travel, ask the Special Services Response Center to put your name on the NEA Preferred Travelers mailing list, to receive all the latest information on Association-sponsored tours. As a Preferred Traveler, you'll also get a free subscription to *NEAdventures*, a newsletter for globe-trotting members.

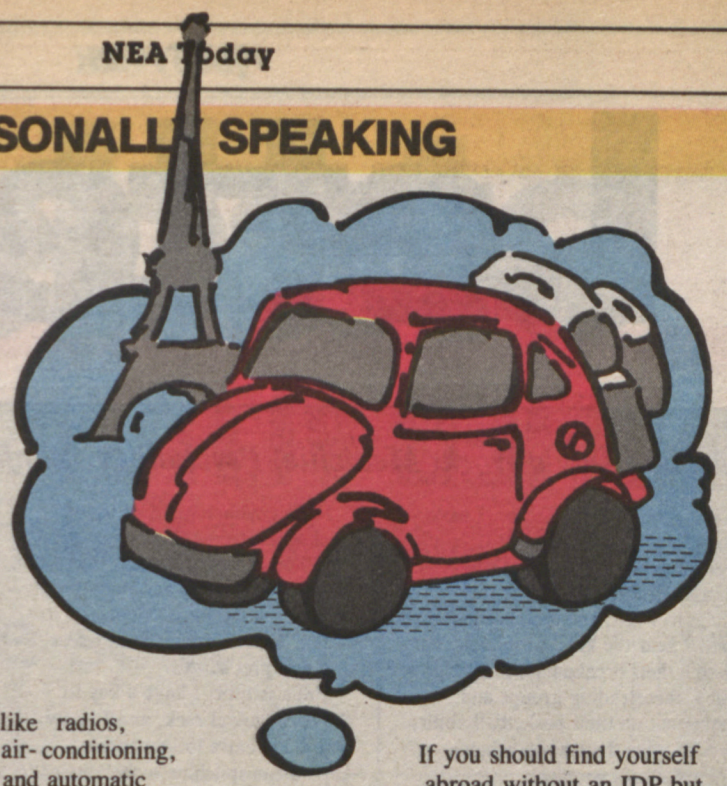
Renting a Car Overseas

For the adventuresome, there's no better way to learn about a new place and its people than to rent a car and drive around. Americans tend to feel at home behind the wheel. But when you're overseas, it helps if you've done a bit of preplanning before you attempt to drive off into the unknown.

First, renting a car may not be as easy as it is at home. In most countries you can make arrangements through a U.S. rental car company with little difficulty, but there are some exceptions. In Saudi Ariabia, for instance, women aren't allowed to drive! Other less drastic restrictions apply in other countries.

So if you're planning to rent a car, it pays to arrange for it before going abroad. That way you'll not only learn of any special restrictions, but you'll also guarantee a car will be waiting for you. Currency exchange rates are often more favorable this way, too.

Remember that the car you'll be renting may not be similar to those you're used to. European rental cars are often small and underpowered by U.S. standards. You also may have to do without luxuries like radios, air-conditioning, and automatic transmissions. (The larger rental agencies do try to maintain a supply of mid-sized cars with automatic transmissions, for Americans.)



Your NEA/Hertz discount is valid in most places overseas. If you don't have your discount ID card yet, you can request one by writing to your state association or NEA Special Services.

After you've rented a car, the next hurdle is making sure you can drive it. In many countries, you'll need an International Driving Permit (IDP)—easily obtained from the AAA or the American Auto Touring Alliance. You won't be able to get this permit abroad, so it's a good item to bring with you even if you don't have definite plans to rent a car.

If you should find yourself abroad without an IDP but with a sudden desire to drive, don't despair. Some countries will accept your current driver's license.

There's a catch, however. Many countries—including West Germany, Austria, and Italy—require a translation. That means a trip to the U.S. Embassy, which takes unnecessary time away from your vacation.

Assuming you've rented a car and have a valid license, you're still not ready to hit the road—until you know the rules. Many people have heard that the West German *autobahn* has no speed limits. Although this is true, don't assume it means traffic laws are fewer overseas. If anything, regulations are enforced more seriously than they are in the U.S.—and they can vary substantially from country to country.

You're expected to know the rules, and fines can be quite severe. In Sweden, for instance, the blood-alcohol level considered dangerous is about half the American standard—and exceeding it can earn you a night in jail.

Your insurance policy probably won't cover you when driving abroad, so you'll need a special policy. Again, the AAA is a good source of information. Be sure you have complete coverage—an accident could mean lots of red tape and legal proceedings that can show you an aspect of life abroad you'd rather not see.

Don't let all these warnings discourage you. There are many parts of the world that seem to have been created with the auto in mind. Enjoy the freedom of exploring them on your own, by car—just be sure you've done your planning ahead of time.

Don't Come Back Home To an Empty House

Before you rush off on vacation, take a few precautions to lessen the chances of returning to a ransacked home.

Thieves are opportunists. While it's impossible to make your house burglar-*proof*, a burglar-*resistant* house will deter all but the most determined criminals.

The most important measure you can take is keeping a low profile. Don't attract a thief's attention by displaying your stereo, TV, or home computer where they can be seen from a ground-level window. Don't leave valuables lying about, either.

If you're going to be away for a few days, give your home a "lived-in" look. Keep a few lights burning (think about investing in a timer that can turn lights and radios on and off at preset intervals), and don't close all the window shades. Lower the volume of your telephone's bell, or unplug it. Ask neighbors to collect your mail and paper. In the winter, arrange to have your walks cleared should it snow.

Few burglars care which particular house they rob. So the tougher it is to break into your house, the greater the likelihood that they'll get discouraged and leave. Light the outside of your house, and trim hedges that might conceal someone breaking in. Don't leave ladders or tools outdoors—they could be just what the thief needs to get in.

Above all, never leave a key outside, no matter how ingenious you think the hiding place is! Lock *all* entrances to your home—not just the doors, but also the windows and garage. Poor-quality locks are a false economy.

Buy a small safe to contain your valuables and place it in an unlikely location or, better yet, rent a safety deposit box at your bank.

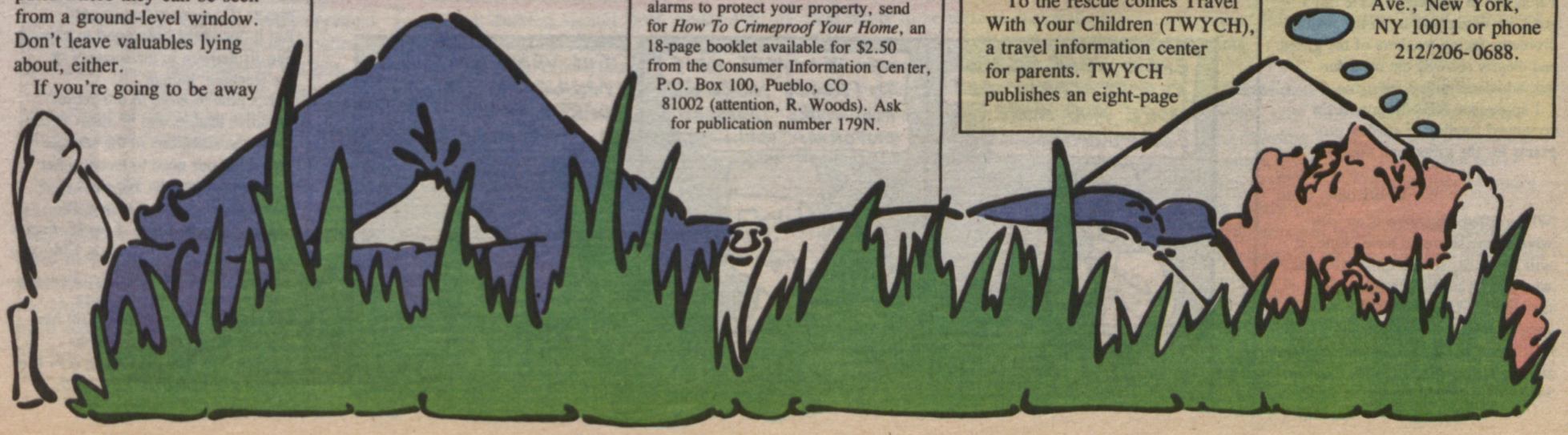
For more information on how to use landscaping, lighting, locks, and alarms to protect your property, send for *How To Crimeproof Your Home*, an 18-page booklet available for $2.50 from the Consumer Information Center, P.O. Box 100, Pueblo, CO 81002 (attention, R. Woods). Ask for publication number 179N.

Traveling with Your Young'uns

In a two-career marriage, vacations are one of the rare times the entire family can be together. Yet many parents are hesitant to take their children on "real" vacations. After all, as any parent can tell you, if the children don't have a good time, *nobody* has a good time.

To the rescue comes Travel With Your Children (TWYCH), a travel information center for parents. TWYCH publishes an eight-page quarterly newsletter, "Family Travel Time," that lists cities, resorts, hotels, cruise lines, and airlines that welcome children and provide special facilities for them.

An annual subscription costs $15. For more information, write to TWYCH at 80 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10011 or phone 212/206-0688.



Letters

Room for Improving

Despite all the progress in the area of women's sports participation, we have a way to go.

At the national level, as your March cover story points out, we need legislation to strengthen Title IX protections watered down by the *Grove City* decision.

But we've got some work to do on the state and local levels as well. For example, though Title IX stipulated that financial aid must be in proportion to the numbers of male and female student athletes, that's not what's happened.

A recent study by Ann Uhlir of Texas Woman's University in Denton points out that for 1980-81, men—comprising two-thirds of all college athletes—received over 80 percent of athletic financial aid; women—one-third of the athletes—got just 18 percent.

Another challenge for us is to encourage more women to pursue college degrees that will qualify them for coaching positions, particularly at the high school level. As more and more girls become interested in sports at an earlier age, schools need more coaches—male and female—who are trained and willing to help youngsters refine their athletic talents.

Finally, we need to make sure our schools provide a program of sound health and physical education for all students, whether they're athletically talented or not.

Mary Jo Christian
Prince George's County, Maryland

Gifted Ed: Two Cheers

As a teacher of gifted students, grades 2 through 6, I was glad to see something at last on gifted education in *NEA Today.*

"Doing Right by the Gifted and Talented" in the March issue did a good job of zeroing in on the major problems facing teachers of the gifted and clearly showed the need for individualized gifted curricula.

I appreciate NEA's support for continued funding of special programs for the gifted and talented.

Marilyn Marsh
Chillicothe, Ohio

While gifted education is an idea whose time seems to have come, it will not occur for all those students who need it unless mandated, K through 12, by the federal government.

It's too easy for states and localities to assume that because they service either gifted or talented youth on some small scale, they're fulfilling their obligation to them. This is a sad situation.

Without well designed programs to help them fulfill their potential, not only do gifted students lose, but ultimately so do the country and the world.

Daria M. Plummer
South Windsor, Conn.

More Time for Caring

I just had to write to applaud President Futrell's views on class size in your Jan.-Feb. issue.

In 1977 I had over 30 first graders. Even with an aide, that was too many. There was barely time to teach minimum competencies, let alone give any individual attention.

Since then, I'm happy to say, our school district has made—and kept—a commitment to limit classes to 25 students or fewer. I now feel good about the attention and nurturing I can provide. I have the time to look every student in the eyes and to recognize a response from each individual.

The commitment to smaller class size allows me to teach my students and help them flourish, as President Futrell says, "one by one."

Jarene Fluckiger
Afton, Wyoming

School Health Hazards

While educators are concerned over illegal drugs that trigger mental deterioration and self-destruction, it's time to take action against two common classroom chemicals that are infamous brain-killers: mercury (and its compounds) and carbon disulfide. Both instigate personality changes and suicidal tendencies.

Sources of mercury pollution include oxygen production experiments, barometers, and thermometers. Since elemental mercury easily migrates by vaporization, it is especially insidious.

The effective control of these and other psychochemicals would enhance overall achievement and diminish absenteeism, disciplinary caseloads, and untimely deaths.

Morris Leland Martin
Delaware, Ohio

Tired of 'Crybabies'

If we want to prove we're professionals who deserve more money and better working conditions, we'll have to give in on several controversial issues.

All teachers should be happy to be tested. After all, testing is our 'thing'! Let's stop protecting those who can't make it. Labor unions are criticized for that all the time. Ask the silent majority of teachers if they'd be willing to be tested. (I'm tired of hearing from the vocal minority.)

No teaching certificate should be renewed unless the teacher has earned additional college credit. We should require at least six semester hours every five years. Lifelong education is our 'thing.'

Teachers should not be paid solely on years of experience. Supply and demand and other factors should be considered. Science and math teachers should be paid more, in many cases. How many people can teach trigonometry or physics or chemistry? Let's stop acting like a labor union on these issues!

Better teachers in any area should be paid more. It may only be token, but excellence must be rewarded. It won't be easy to decide who gets a bonus, but we must swallow our pride, admit it won't be perfectly fair (what is, these days?), and live with it.

I suspect there's a large silent group of teachers who agree with me that Association crybabies in Arkansas, Tennessee, and elsewhere do us more damage with the public than they realize.

Richard Kesler
Olney, Illinois

Too Much Bureaucracy?

It's a shame there's so much animosity between public and private schools. There's a lot we could learn from each other.

I taught in private schools for six years. There was no central office, no board of education, no supervisory personnel. And we did just fine.

For the next two years, I taught in Catholic schools, in an archdiocese serving 25,000 students. The central office consisted of about four people who were seldom seen—and who were paid less than teachers because, as everyone knew, their job was easier.

For the last five years I've been in a public school system about the same size as that archdiocese. We have a multimillion-dollar central office building staffed with hundreds of people, supervisors paid far more than we make, and a separate board of education. And we're *not* doing just fine.

I wonder why.

Chip Hippler
Relay, Maryland

Teacher in Space

This whole teacher in space business is a sham—a big publicity splash. For the federal government to spend money shooting a teacher into the wild blue yonder helps education about as much as my eating vegetables helps prevent starvation in Ethiopia.

In my classroom, which I share with another teacher, I must scrounge for ditto paper and beg for pencils. A decent math workbook for my slow learners is nonexistent.

Why not invest the money for the teacher in space project where it would really do some good for education: in the classroom.

One small step for man. . . one giant leap—backward—for education.

Barney Simon
Malibu, California

School Prayer

The backers of school prayer have begun innocently enough by proposing "voluntary silent prayer." Once this is accepted, however, we can envision a future where the most vocal students, parents, and educators control the content or manner of this prayer. We can easily foresee a time when the Moral Majority enlightens us regarding the right way to pray.

I feel honored to be teaching a diverse group of children of different races, cultures, and religions. My students may be accustomed to praying in a particular way in their homes and places of worship that's different from the way Jerry Falwell would like us to pray. My students may not be experienced with prayer at all, or they may be used to praying to a different Being than some of us do.

As leaders in a classroom, do we have the right to influence these children? Can we be objective enough to oversee the diversity of prayer?

We need to make our feelings known to our public officials, reminding them of our forebears' intent to make this country a free place for people of all religions or no religions.

Many teachers would shy away from the responsibility of leading prayer if it were to be assigned. But it does very little good to express our displeasure in the security of the teachers' lounge.

It's time to write to our representative leaders and let them know about the situations in the schools and about our need to teach rather than to lead prayer. We need to take a stand before it's too late.

Lori M. Fagan
Aurora, Colorado

All in a Day's Work: Medicine, Psychology, Banjo Playing, Shoe Repair...

I'm a mother and a father. I have the largest family in town. Every year it grows by 25 or so.

That's a lot of shoes to tie, faces to wash, and toothpaste to dish out. I hear the kids' problems and watch their breakdancing. I judge their cheerleading groups and comment on their basketball ability. I even wipe their noses when their feelings get hurt.

I'm a doctor. I can fix jammed fingers, bee stings, and "skeeter bites." I can tape a sprained ankle, pull baby teeth, remove splinters, and vanquish hiccups. I'm even learning to mend broken hearts.

I'm a psychologist, a curator of children's dreams. I've become a behavior expert in matters like homework excuses and math problems. I can diagnose "special needs" kids. I can test and retest and interpret scores.

I'm a janitor. I have a key to the paper towel rack, and I know where the extra toilet paper's kept. I can spitshine a chalkboard.

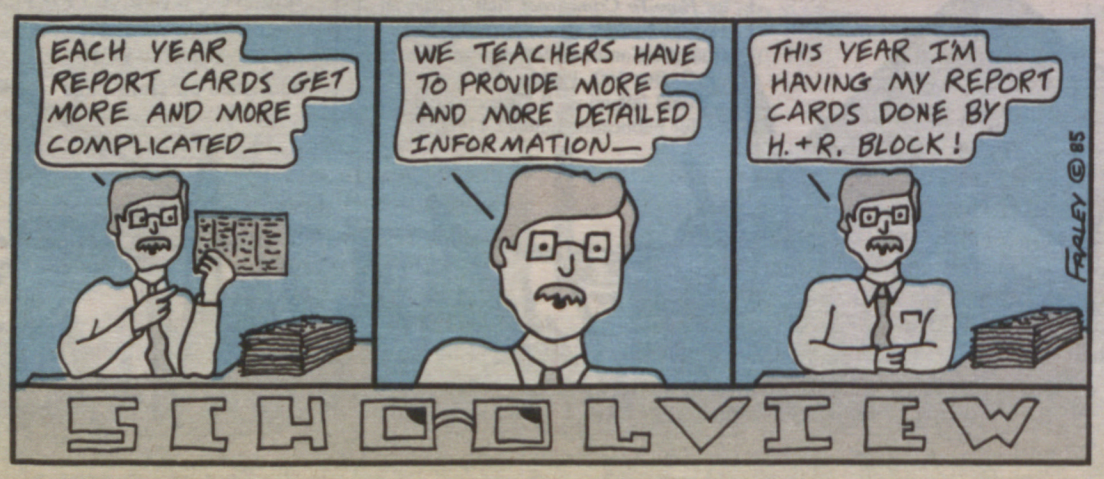
I'm an electrician. I can hotwire a bell circuit in 15 seconds. I can replace a battery in anything. I can rig the projector where it runs backwards.

I'm also a nutrition expert, matchmaker, interpreter, entertainer, watch repairman, shoe cobbler, and optician. I can sing, dance, and play the banjo. I can repair earrings, belt buckles, and zippers. I can sew pockets on shirts and comb hair for pictures. I can pull ticks and clean fingernails.

In my spare time, I try to teach reading, English, spelling, science, health, history, and math. I throw in a smattering of bicycle safety and drug education. I organize a career day and set up field trips. I know who Casimir Pulaski is.

I'm just a teacher.

Stan Hull
Harrisburg, Illinois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THIS YEAR I'M HAVING MY REPORT CARDS DONE BY H.+R. BLOCK!
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SCHOOLVIEW

Address correspondence to "Letters," *NEA Today*, 1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. We reserve the right to edit letters for length.

Debate

Should school buses have seat belts?

Bruce Kellman

YES

Association activist Diane Formosa has driven school buses in Clover Park—a Tacoma, Wash., suburb—for 16 years. She currently transports both handicapped and regular students. Formosa is president of the Clover Park Bus Drivers Association.

My 16 years of school bus driving have convinced me that it's time to equip our buses with seat belts. They're needed to ensure that our children will have the best possible protection in emergencies.

Driving a bus is an enormous responsibility. When you're stopped with a busload of children at a railroad crossing and a full gravel truck is coming upon you at 40 miles an hour, you realize how great your responsibility is.

At times like those, I think how much more secure I'd feel if those children whose lives are in my hands were wearing seat belts.

We bus drivers can't control every situation we encounter when we're traveling to and from schools. Looking out for the other driver certainly helps, but even the safest driver has no guarantee that he or she won't become involved in an accident.

Imagine what can happen if a bus makes an emergency stop or is involved in a collision. Children may be thrown from their seats to unsafe parts of the bus or into the windows. Smaller children are at special risk because their feet don't touch the floor and because they lack coordination. They need seat belts just to prevent them from falling out of their seats when there's any quick movement of the bus.

As far as I'm concerned, no handicapped student should be without a seat belt—for obvious reasons.

Some would argue that students on school buses are rarely hurt in collisions. They point to the size and weight of the buses as compared to other vehicles. But school bus accidents occur every year, and children *do* get hurt! According to the latest statistics from the National Safety Council, there were 3,300 student injuries—and 55 student deaths—in school bus accidents in 1983.

There are other practical arguments for equipping buses with seat belts:

► Students who run, jump, or hit other children on the bus would be easier to control if they wore seat belts.

► If *every* child were required to be belted in, school districts would finally have to provide enough buses to eliminate the problem of overcrowding.

► Seat belts could be used to control band instruments—which can become dangerous flying objects.

► Having seat belts on school buses would reinforce in children the importance of the seat belt habit. As things stand now, parents who have tried to make "buckling up" an automatic response in their children find their efforts undermined every time the kids get on a school bus.

I agree that there are problems to be worked out before seat belts on school buses become a reality. For example, just installing the belts won't necessarily mean they're *used*. We need legislation requiring that all students who ride school buses must wear seat belts.

That leads to another crucial question: Who would supervise the use of belts? School bus drivers already have more than enough to do, trying to drive safely amidst everyday discipline problems, kids who get sick on the bus, and all the rest. It would be more than unreasonable to expect them also to monitor whether each child is buckled up.

What districts should have, under *any* circumstances, are aides on buses to help with the supervision. Just as an airline steward or stewardess checks passengers' seat belts, so would the school bus aide. And he or she would help with evacuation of children in case of fire or other emergencies.

Then there's the problem of money. There's no way to get around it. Hiring school bus aides takes money—as does installing and maintaining seat belts.

But compare all the costs to the value of just one child's life. Our children are more important than any dollar figure a district can present.

Seat belts on school buses are a must.

Joe Di Dio

NO

Becky Howell Lee is an 11-year veteran school bus driver in Alabama's Walker County. President of the Alabama Education Association's Educational Support Personnel Organization, she also serves on NEA's Committee on Educational Support Personnel.

My main concern as a bus driver is getting students to and from school safely. I love the children who ride my bus, and if I thought seat belts would make the bus safer for them, I'd consider helping install them myself.

I don't think lap belts would make buses safer, though. There are several reasons why I think they might even do more harm than good.

One of the most important arguments against seat belts on buses is the compartmentalized safety design of buses since 1977. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's regulations beginning in that year called for higher-backed, impact-absorbing seats and padded reinforcement of those seats.

Compartmentalization works when, upon impact, an unbelted child slides forward on the seat and into the back of the seat ahead. In contrast, a child with a lap belt will be thrown forward at great force, possibly causing severe injury to his or her abdominal region.

Experts contend, and have testified before Congress, that young children aged five to seven may not have strong enough internal organs to withstand the pressure of a lap belt in a collision. Seat belts have caused crushed kidneys, ruptured bladders, and other internal injuries in young children.

I know that those who want seat belts in buses say that in an accident where the bus rolls over, belted students would be less likely to be thrown out of the bus. Think about this, though.

If the bus came to rest on its side or roof, pupils could suffer serious head injuries when releasing the belts. In some cases their heads could be as much as three or four feet from the ceiling.

A fire in such a situation could be an even greater catastrophe. An injured child unable to unfasten the seat belt might be trapped in a burning bus.

I agree that young children should be taught to use seat belts in cars, but I think they can understand why that doesn't necessarily apply to buses. Children have the ability to reason.

Parents should explain that buses are the safest vehicles on the road—at least 14 times safer than the family car. An average auto weighs only one-seventh as much as a bus does, and children transported in buses are above the normal impact and penetration zone of an automobile collision.

In Alabama, there hasn't been a death inside a school bus since 1969, and nationally, the number of school bus fatalities is decreasing yearly. The decline in fatalities has many causes. Among them: drivers who maintain discipline on buses.

Keeping order among 60 children on a bus is hard enough without the added responsibility of a seat belt law. A driver would have to make sure that students could get the belts on and off—and prevent certain kids from using them as weapons or cutting them out of the seats altogether.

Statistics show that children who ride buses are in the greatest danger as they get on and off the bus, not while they're inside. In the last 53 years, most school bus fatalities have occurred in loading and unloading zones, not in moving accidents. Some have happened because a passing motorist didn't stop, or a bus driver didn't see a small head in front of a bus.

Better and more diverse training for drivers, new mirror designs for buses, new crossing gates, and stricter and more frequent inspections could make buses safer. Public awareness is also an important safety factor.

Parents must teach their children the importance of obeying the bus driver and maintaining good conduct on the bus.

It's not seat belts that are needed in school buses. What is needed is an adult on each bus to control the children so the bus driver can concentrate on the road and safe driving.

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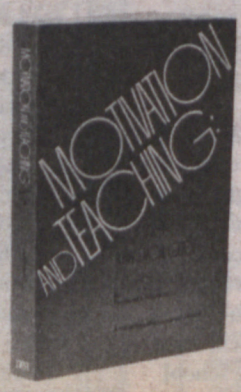

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